DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 310 271 CE 053 088

AUTHOR	Kamlongera, Christopher
TITLE	Theatre for Development in Africa with Case Studies from Malawi and Zambia.
INSTITUTION	German Foundation for International Development, Bonn (West Germany), Education, Science and Documentation Div.; Malawi Univ., Zomba. Dept. of Fine and Performing Arts.
REPORT NO	DSE-DOK-1499-C/a
PUB DATE	89
NOTE	302p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC13 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*African Culture; Colonialism; Developing Nations; *Development; Foreign Countries; *Nonformal Education; *Popular Culture; *Theater Arts
IDENTIFIERS	*Africa; Malawi; Zambia

ABSTRACT

This document describes the development of theater in Africa, over the last 20 years, from a medium of entertainment for the colonial elite to an African theatre, after independence. It describes various approaches to the use of theater as a medium of education and development. Nine chapters in the book concern: (1) background to African drama; (2) theater and society in Africa; (3) the future of African theater; (4) taking theater to people; (5) creating a representative African theater; (6) theater and development in Africa; (7) theater for development in Malawi; (8) theater for development in Zambia; and (9) analysis of theater for development work. The study points out that a truly popular theater would presumably be one in which the people themselves, in spite of the handicaps imposed by the lack of formal education, could initiate and develop theatrical explorations of their predicaments and, by doing so could engage in a long-term process of social self-education. An 81-item bibliography concludes the document. (NLL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED310271

Deutsche Stiftung für internationale Entwicklung

German Foundation for International Development

DSE

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

Department of Fine and Performing Arts

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J Muller

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Christopher Kamlongera

Theatre for Development in Africa with Case Studies from Malawi and Zambia

CE053088

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Zentralstelle für Erziehung, Wissenschaft und Dokumentation – Bonn
Education, Science and Documentation Centre

ZED

Published by: Deutsche Stiftung für internationale Entwicklung
German Foundation for International Development
Zentralstelle für Erziehung Wissenschaft und Dokumentation
Centre for Education Science and Documentation
Hans Boeckler Strasse 5
P.O.Box 30 03 80
D 5300 Bonn 3, Federal Republic of Germany

When ordering this publicaton please indicate DOK 1499 C/a

Deutsche Stiftung für internationale Entwicklung

German Foundation for International Development

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
Department of Fine and Performing Arts

Christopher Kamlongera

Theatre for Development in Africa with Case Studies from Malawi and Zambia

DOK 1499 C/a

Zentralstelle für Erziehung Wissenschaft und Dokumentation
Education Science and Documentation Centre
Bonn, Federal Republic of Germany

ZED

FOREWORD

Over the last two decades there has been an increasing interest in traditional media, especially popular theatre, as media for formal and non-formal basic education. This growing interest is largely based on the conviction that development must be based on indigenous resources, indigenous solutions, and indigenous creativity. The study of Dr. Christopher Kamlongera, Head, Department of Fine and Performing Arts, Chancellor College, University of Malawi, describes the development of theatre in Africa from a medium of entertainment for the colonial elite towards an African theatre after independence. It describes various approaches to use theatre as a medium of education and development.

All experiments tried to take theatre to the people instead of expecting people to come to the theatre. These experiments took a number of stages. There was a stage of development in which established plays were toured to various communities. Another stage in the process was when bureaucratically-inspired plays for rural and urban slum communities were performed, for example, about the need for family planning or literacy to 'motivate the target group'. Another stage in the process of popular theatre points in a completely different direction. Here emphasis lies on theatre made by the people themselves either for entertainment or to solve local community problems and, if possible, to serve both purposes. At this stage the message does not come from the top, is not formulated by the bureaucrates or development workers but by the spectators themselves. The plays which deal with local community problems are deliberately left unfinished. The villagers, as it is the case in Malawi, are then asked to add to them, or even to complete them through discussions and/or by acting out their own solutions as part of the performance and to finish this performance themselves.

The study points out that a truly popular theatre would thus presumably be one in which the people themselves, in spite of the handicaps imposed by lack of formal education, could initiate and develop theatrical explorations of their predicaments and by doing so engage in a long term process of social self education.

The German Foundation for International Development tries to support a variety of formal and non-formal basic education progrrammes in Africa. The Foundation is convinced that especially a strategy to develop non-formal basic education programmes must be culture-based and that new knowledge skills and attitudes can be introduced only with great care and not from top-down but only within the framework of existing knowledge, cultural patterns, institutional values and human resources, and that the indigenous culture is a fabric within which development can best be woven because of the following assumptions: Indigenous elements have traditional legitimacy for participants in development programmes; these elements contain symbols that express and identify various valid perceptions of reality; and they serve multiple functions - they can involve, entertain, instruct and inform.

We have observed these links between education and culture for years and especially since the international symposium on 'tradition for development' in which we cooperated with the International Council for Adult Education in 1980. We, therefore, publish the study of Christopher Kamlongera which could enrich the international discussion on the use of tradition for development.

Professor Dr. Hans-Rimbert Hemmer
Director General

Dr. Josef Müller
Non-formal Basic Education

To Patience and James
who we always remember fondly

The Department of Fine and Performing Arts, Chancellor College, University of Malawi

The Department is located in Chancellor College, a constituent college of the University of Malawi, in Zomba. It was created in September, 1981 as a merger of Fine Arts and the Drama component of the Department of English. A Music section was added to this merger. Apart from providing basic training in the arts the Department is very keen to introduce students to the theory and skills of the arts as a vehicle of development-oriented non-formal adult education. The Department also has a strong outreach programme through which it organizes workshops in choral music, theatre for development and painting for people outside the University (including rural places).

Dr. Christopher Kamlongera, Head of Fine and Performing Arts Department, Chancellor College, University of Malawi, is a Senior Lecturer in Drama. He has a B.A. from University of Malawi, Diploma in Teaching of English Overseas, Master of Arts in Drama and Theatre Arts and a Doctor of Philosophy in English from University of Leeds, England. He has published several articles of theatre and culture in Malawi and her neighbouring countries.

Photographs:
Inga Quedenfeld: Title page and after pages 60, 74, 85, 108, 180 and page 126 a; University of Malawi/Chancellor College Theatre Team: pages 115, 126 b, and after page 180; Dr. Udo Bude, DSE: after page 180.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book has been published with assistance from the German Foundation for International Development (DSE), Bonn, West Germany. It is a result of working together with several people in theatre workshops and in the classroom. I would like to acknowledge most sincerely the help I have always received from these people. David Kerr, members of the Chancellor College Travelling Theatre Company (1981), the Theatre for Development classes at Chancellor College, University of Malawi, Dr. Hayo Schmidt M.D. of the Liwonde A.D.D. are the company, initiators and promoters of ideas expressed herein although opinions and mistakes are mine alone. Thank you all! To support some of my arguments I have tapped the wisdom of several eminent scholars as it appears in their books and articles. I cannot mention all by name here. I express my indebtness to them.

The wish to collect, sift and put together these ideas started at the Leeds University Theatre Workshop under the supervision of Mr. Martin Banham as I worked on my doctoral thesis in the School of English there. And indeed some of the ideas presented here appear in that thesis albeit in a modified form here and there. Chapters One and Six have appeared in Africana Marburgensia Vols X1X and XV1, whilst parts of Chapter Seven have appeared in Theatre Research International Vol. VII (1982) and in a report jointly written for the Regional Office of W.H.O. in Brazaville (1987) by Dr. Ezekiel Kalipeni and myself.

Dr. Adrian Roscoe, University of Massey, New Zealand, Mr. Isaac Sakala of Zambia Broadcasting Service, Dr. Amandina Lihamba, University of Dar es Salaam, Zakes Mda, University of Lesotho, Dr. Hansel Ndumbe Eyo, University of Yaunde, Dr. Robert McLaren, University of Zimbabwe, Mr. Raymond De Souza George, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra

Leone are friends and colleagues who have encouraged me either by sending me required encouragement and necessary information at one time or another. I hope this work does your help justice as well as spread the message afar. Thanks to Mr. Graciano Kaphinde for typing the manuscript.

My dear wife Cecilia perseveres unnecessary hardships as I do this never ending work.

CONTENTS

PART ONE: Towards African Theatre

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHAPTER ONE

1. BACKGROUND TO AFRICAN DRAMA 1

1.1. Colonial Education and Drama
1.2. The Quest for Identity 13

CHAPTER TWO

2. THEATRE AND SOCIETY IN AFRICA 30

2.1. Struggle for Independence 32
2.2. Post Independence Period 37

CHAPTER THREE

3. WHITHER AFRICAN THEATRE 47

3.1. Directions
3.2. Theatres and Companies 49

CHAPTER FOUR

4. TAKING THEATRE TO THE PEOPLE 61

4.1. Traditional Travelling Theatre 63
4.2. Syncretic Travelling Theatre 64
4.3. The Concert Party and the Yoruba Opera 65
4.4. University Travelling Theatre Companies 69

CHAPTER FIVE

5. TOWARDS AFRICAN THEATRE 75

5.1. Creating Theatre for the People
5.2. Creating Theatre with the People 79

PART TWO: Case Studies of Theatre for Development

Page

CHAPTER SIX

6. THEATRE AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA 87

6.1. Theatre for Development in Africa: Background

6.2. Origins and Development of Theatre for Development in Africa 88

6.3. Rationale 94

6.4. The Nature of 'Theatre for Development' 102
6.4.1 Songs 103
6.4.2 Dance
6.4.3 Puppetry 104
6.4.4 Drama 105

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI 109

7.1. Puppet Theatre by the Extension Services Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture - Malawi 110

7.1.1 History of the Extension Services in Malawi's Agriculture Department

7.1.2 History of Puppetry in Extension Services Branch 113
7.1.3 Preparation of 'Puppets' and 'Messages' 114
7.1.4 Presentation of Puppet Shows 117
7.1.5 Observations and Comment 120

7.2. Theatre for Development Workshop at Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre (Malawi) organized by the Chancellor College Travelling Theatre form 15th to 25th July, 1981 123

7.2.1 Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre

7.2.2 The Workshop on Theatre for Development

7.2.3 Planning 124

7.2.4 The Workshop 125

Page

CONTIN. CHAPTER SEVEN

7.3. Popular Theatre and Primary Health Care in Malawi 142

7.3.1 Health Information and Education in Malawi: An Overview 144

7.3.2 Liwonde Agricultural Division Primary Health Care Project in Mwinda, Mbela and Chisi Island Areas 147

7.3.3 Organisational and Implementation Structure of Liwonde PHC Programme 153

7.3.4 Strategy and Process of 'Theatre for Development' 160

7.3.5 Theatre for Development at Mwima 162

7.3.6 Impact of Liwonde ADD PHC in Mwina, Mbela and Chisi Islands 169

7.3.7 Diffusion of Information and Education for Health in Liwonde ADD 181

CHAPTER EIGHT

8. THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN ZAMBIA 183

8.1. Chikwakwa Theatre and Development in Zambia

8.1.1 Drama Workshop Tours: Their History and Development in Zambia 184

8.1.2 Chikwakwa Theatre Rural Drama Workshops 188

8.1.3 The Creation of a Popular Play: Matteo Sakala 198

8.2. The Zambian International Theatre Institute (1) Theatre for Development Workshop at Chalimbana (2) Follow-up Work by Tafika Theatre 210

8.2.1 Chalimbana Theatre for Development Workshop 1979

8.2.2 Tafika Theatre and the Alcohol Theatre Project 218

CHAPTER NINE

9. CONCLUSION
Analysis of Theatre for Development Work 223

NOTES 249

Chapter One

1. BACKGROUND TO AFRICAN DRAMA

1.1. COLONIAL EDUCATION AND DRAMA

As early as the days of the 'scramble for Africa', the British Government instructed travellers, missionaries and all others coming to live or work on the continent to include the cultivation of civilized arts amongst the natives on their agenda. Consider Her Majesty's Government orders to Dr. David Livingstone on his Central African travels:

> live at peace with the natives, obtain all the information and try to begin civilization among them by introducing arts and commerce as far as may seem proper.(1)

The interpretation of these orders was left very much to the traveller's own discretion. This was not a simple task either. The first group of visitors to the continent were simply bewildered by what they saw there. They did not know how to cope with the continent. Dr. Kirk, a member of Dr. David Livingstone's team recorded in his diary an account of a Malawian funeral ceremony thus:

> March 31st (1859)... Landed and saw the big man again. There was a great beating of drums. We went to see them. It was a mourning for a boy who died yesterday. In one place were the musicians with drums of three kinds.... While these fellows hammered away, the boys and girls had a dance which consisted of gliding and turning about after a certain specific rule which was quite as intelligible to me as that of a ballroom in England. The motions too were quite elegant and had the great advantage that people seemed happy, no confounded white chokers or stiffness about them. They clapped their hands which might with great advantage be added to the European style. The dances of the older people was not so elegant although nothing of the disgusting nature of the Tete and Sena dances, so popular with the Portuguese.

> The mourning women were at the side and at times two of them came up. One walking on hands and knees, passed through among the dancers, then rolled on her back. The other had her hair covered with raw cotton, carried in her hand a bow and a few arrows with poison points withdrawn. In the other hand, she carried a bottle gourd drinking cup. Having passed through, they returned weeping. One woman fainted and was carried off. What was the meaning of the ceremony, I could not see. The mourning of the women or at least of a few of them who either really mourned or were told off for that purpose, was evident but then the mysteries of the crawling, rolling about, carrying bows and arrows and drinking cup, I don't know. Then why should youngsters be so merry, and the old folks too in their dance, did not seem to mourn. It may be to dispel the grief which may be thought proper for relatives only. We returned.(2)

This liberal attitude disappeared as soon as missionaries actually came to settle and work amongst Africans. Instead of inquiry they brought forth outright condemnation of African behaviour. An example of such condemnation may be gleaned from another report made by Fraser amongst people from the same country that Kirk passed through. He too was watching a native performance of some sort:

> For an hour or two the dance went on very merrily and gracefully, girls performing by themselves, and then the boys by themselves. But as they warmed up to fun of it all, the action became more and more obscene, urged on by the incitement of the old women, and the ribald laughter of the onlookers.
>
> I turned aside to my tent ashamed for what I saw, and burning with sense of the loathesmeness that had been let loose. Next morning I assembled the village, and spoke to them of the degradation of last night's performance. I blushed to speak of these things, while the old women and men looked up, unashamed and wondering at my denunciation.(3)

This was very much in keeping with the goals of missionary work on the continent. First and foremost their goal was to wean the 'pagan' natives from their heathen ways. Instead the 'natives' were to adopt British ways which would guarantee them a passage to heaven.

In pursuit of this goal, efforts to teach Africans British culture became the business of all missionaries. Administrators who came after, joined in these efforts. Whilst they made direct attempts to change the native they embarked on establishing their own life-style. This also contributed in the 'weaning' of the African towards 'better' life. In other words, the African had two teachers. There was the school room or the church where he was admonished and threatened by 'hell fire' sermons on the one hand, and his power of observation as he lived at the foot of the hills where Europeans built their houses. Lessons acquired from these experiences have given Africa her literary drama theatre personalities like Soyinka and Ngugi wa Thiong'o in University lecture rooms, and popular theatre artists like Bob Johnson, Hubert Ogunde, Alaiya and Gibson Kente.

Just as present day practitioners recognize that the African likes to dance, the colonial eye was quick to notice it too. Having been amongst the natives for a short while it was possible to say that:

> ... no drama, as such, was so far known to exist among the raw natives, but that all dancing, singing, and story telling and drumming was intensely dramatic. Ritual drama, as an approach to the unseen, had not been found ... (4)

As far as this reporter was concerned, Africans were still to evolve to the Dionysian stage. And to do so they needed help from the enlightened minds of Europe. Consideration of such a possibility was being made even as early as 1930:

> The evolution of dramatic art amongst the Africans has all kinds of interesting possibilities. The beginnings of ballet and opera are foreshadowed in some of the more highly organized tribal dances .... if the Europeans concerned with dramatic art are only to do a little research on the primitive theatre, their imaginations will soon quicken to the possibilities latent in these situations.(5)

The suggested 'research' never materialized. Instead 'teaching', 'weaning from pagan ways' and 'improvement' of the African took place. In spite of the rush to teach the African, there was no agreed method of doing so save the common belief that he was uncivilized and wanting. This situation occasionally aroused fears in some people who felt that African art was:

> in a precarious position; The natural artistic expression of a primitive people is brought suddenly and violently into contact with a highly civilized and mechanized people ... African art is very definitely-young-in all its manifestations; here are no memories of older civilizations, but the simplest of forms, and childlike expression: We may look to the African to show us, as a thing still alive, the origin of all our own art ... . The art of drama is so very young in the mind of the African that it can hardly be said to exist. And yet the seed of the idea is there, for the African is by nature as full of drama as he is of music ... (6)

By this time the 'griots' and 'Zimbabwe ruins' had not been 'discovered'! It was felt by the colonial mind that the African had to be taught the art of living - not just foreign life, but even his own. It is therefore no wonder that some 'enlightened'

Africans objected to the way their image was being distorted or misrepresented:

> No decent African with an average intelligence and liberal training will brook a description of what an African play does look like, or should look like, when that description takes it for granted that in Africa everything is still of the "Stone Age" (British) the Drama League should collect from the African himself themes and information which firstly represent him in his present state of development, instead of seeking information about "Primitive Man".(7)

We shall not go into a discussion of what the African's 'state of development' was at the time. But we can say that by the time this sort of objection was being voiced a few observations about the African's dramatic potential had been identified. These were his love for 'music', knock-about dancing, story-telling, drumming and perhaps his 'childlike expression'(8). Notice that only the African critic suggests linking drama and the African's 'present state of development'. Herein lies a pointer to the possibility of finding a poetics for African drama. This was never pursued. Instead of 'understanding' the people continued with isolating what we may call characteristic of African entertainment performance. And this job, during the early days of colonialism was mostly left to christian missionaries.

As Joel Adedeji has indicated, the work of such Christian missionaries had more than propagation of the Gospel as its goal:

> .... the activities of the Christian missionaries were not without political motives; to effectively change the people you must change their culture, develop in them a new consciousness through a program of enlightenment that seeks to motivate them towards a new life through the doctrine of Christian salvation. In the course of

> time, a new "civilized community" had begun to emerge, set apart from the "natives one. These people constituted themselves into the 'elite' class, manning key positions in church and later in commerce and in the colonial administration to help shape the course of events.(9)

The relationship between missionaries and Africans should therefore be understood as one of suppression. Their attempts to cultivate an 'enlightened' African elite were geared towards fulfilling their mandate. This was summed up in the orders given to Dr. David Livingstone by the British monarchy. Of course this does not seem so on first reading of the way they went about developing drama on the continent. In this they were gradually joined by administrators and later on by people in areas like agriculture and medicine.

Rewards for such missionary efforts were surfacing little by little. In Ghana at Achimota, by 1930, the British could boast of 'African Theatre' which was in

> the pre-Elizabethan stage morality-play phase in which the most popular form was to take a native legand or story with a moral split up the action into as many as eight or nine different scenes, each dealing with one dramatic moment, and interspersed with knock-about dancing and singing all created on the stage.(10)

Within about fifty years of contact with the European, the African had managed to evolve from his 'childlike' state of drama, past the Dionysian age to the pre-Elizabethan stage. This was a remarkable achievement on the African's part but more so on the part of his teacher! What was the formula being followed? What poetics was being followed in the creation of this drama? From the classroom came suggestions which said that evolving African drama

> . . . must be based on dance
> . . . must be simple in form - childlike
> . . . must have music
> . . . must involve story-telling
> . . . must have drumming
>
> It must have its roots in the village and take its part in the lives of the village people. It must derive lots of its strength, its impetus, from traditional African dramatic forms ... The European must find out what they are and how he can use them. (11)

The suggestions made here arose from what the European understood of the African who, as far as he were concerned, was child-like, undeveloped and unsophisticated. To ask that drama being evolved for Africans be based on African life was a fallacy. The European - particularly the missionary - had already decided he was going to accept only those Native practices that suited his missionary or civilizing mission. What the civilizing mission was like in the colonial period has been painted most vividly by Joseph Conrad in his Heart of Darkness. And the picture one sees here leaves a good deal to be desired. The European working amongst natives did not find out what the 'traditional African forms' were like. Instead he went for a form which he knew from his own background. This was from European theatre. The question of form was thus not a problem. What needed immediate attention was the content to go into this form. So even though he knew of Africans' ability to dance and to sing, and his story-telling tradition it was not so much how these were gone about (or what they spoke about in these) that interested the European. From these he found themes to be fed into the 'imported' form of drama that he was going to teach the

African. The suggestion was made that

> The European must give the African a selection of themes from his own folk-lore, and stories of universal interest ... themes to convey moral teaching which allowed the African to express his views on life as they became affected by his increased contact with the world. (12)

The African that interested the European was that one who had already shown signs of 'improvement' not the 'raw' one. Because it was through these that he was to reach the latter. Most of these had already been enlisted as teachers. Missionaries turned to these and

> taught them technique required for the successful production of propaganda plays for pagan spectators. (13)

There was no question of hiding the intention of promoting drama amongst the Africans. These intentions were geared towards weaning African from their 'pagan' and 'uncivilized' ways. It is important to make clear two points regarding the nature of drama that was being developed here. First of all colonialists - in whatever guise - had chosen to introduce European drama in Africa instead of understanding African theatre forms. The second point is that open propaganda was the kingpin behind efforts to create drama amongst Africans.

In order to give semblance of Africanness to such work and to make it appealing to Africans some token attention was paid to African ways of enjoying and producing entertainment. The drama that was being created emphasised 'noise' and what was being considered the strongest asset in African performance, 'spectacle'. Attempts to create anything thought-provoking were de-emphasized. Folklore provided character traits that were to be used in propaganda plays. For example the clever hare was synonymous to the clever character in a drama. Cleverness being the same as readiness to adopt western ideas.(14) Acting encouraged was burlesque in the extreme and often overdone.(15) Having laid such foundations for their work and having been convinced that this was the right way to develop African drama Europeans began

> to ask African teachers to make a selection of the native themes ... to make plays with their pupils and the adults of the villages.(16)

The competence to do so was to come about after observing Europeans at work. And being highly educated amongst Africans very often if not always included meeting the dramatic literature of the west. Playwrights like Shakespeare would make up the backbone of such literature. Therefore, whatever the African saw Europeans do was augmented by his understanding of such playwrights and their artistry. From such a background came Africa's first indigenous playwrights like Dhlomo from South Africa. They were Christians, teachers and people who were very knowledgeable about the European play. Dhlomo's The Girl Who Killed to Save provides a good example of such work.(17)

The post-independence era writing has been led by people who, like Dhlomo, graduated from an education system that aimed at inculcating the 'best from English literature if not western literature'. In drama the ideas followed the same pattern as those of the colonial days. In any case in most African countries - particularly in their Universities, since it is here that playwriting on the continent seems to have found fodder - efforts to develop African drama were led by expatriate lecturers. A list of some of the productions done at these institutions indicates to what extent such people relied on their own home grown literature rather than local material.(18) The arguments for this bias were that the African would best learn his dramatic art through what was considered good and mature drama of the world. Shakespeare, Shaw, Ibsen and Chekhov, to name but a few dramatists, thus provided the best examples. Gerald Moore defended an African production of Macbeth at the Kampala National Theatre in 1961 in the following words:

> Putting all other justifications aside, there is ultimately no possible objection to African performing Shakespeare which would not also extend to their reading him. Who can logically say "you may read this, but you must on no account aspire to perform it, for that would be aping Europeans"?
>
> ...... Obviously no-one is qualified to preside over the birth of African drama or to direct which influences shall prevail. But we can legitimately argue that an intimate experience of our own dramatic tradition (or the Indian or Chinese for that matter) is likely to be of use to any aspiring dramatist, even if he rejects it all. Rejection is an important creative impetus, but it must first have something to feed upon.(19)

To prove this point, that Africans were going to learn and improve their playwriting in this way, he cited the works of J.P. Clark and Wole Soyinka as derivitives of western drama. Clark's Song of a Goat was described as being modelled on traditional Greek tragedy; whilst Soyinka's The Trials of Brother Jero and A Dance of the Forest were said to owe their style to "folk comedies" of the Irish Theatre and Shakespeare's King Lear respectively.(20) Gerald Moore was suggesting that learning from such western drama would be a matter of choice for the African playwright, and that he could always reject this choice whenever it suited him to do so. But Rubadiri's answer to Nkosi on the question of western influence on African writing reveals another dimension to the whole issue:

> One cannot break away from things which nourish one's way of life .... when I sit down to write, I don't consciously make an effort to try and be an African writer by trying to adopt some so-called African forms. The echoes of the African tradition come to me subconsciously. I hear them, and perhaps this is the only African part - or influence - that I can confess of; otherwise, I think the technical part of it is entirely conditioned by my experience with reading European literature.(21)

Gerald Moore's ideas quoted above represent the 'dreams' of a teacher whilst those of Rubadiri reveal the true results of the teacher's efforts. It is not simple to unlearn or reject what one goes through in school. The African playwright is certainly aware of the need to evolve an aunthentic African theatre, but he has problems undoing the shackles that bind him to the colonial heritage. He still has to find his own poetics for his theatre.

None other than playwrights themselves have noted this variance. The post-colonial period has been a long attempt to make theatre not only relevant to the community, but also a part of the people's life. This attempt manifests itself in debates going on amongst theatre practitioners and creative works that try to marry indigenous performance styles with western ones.

1.2. THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY

In the late fifties, when a literature sufficiently broad to be labelled 'African' became available for study Ramsaran talked of a traditional African drama.(22) His words, it could be said, mark the beginning of attempts to define African drama:

> Side by side with the formal drama of the western stage there exists a strong traditional African drama which is communal activity. This is intimately connected with religious rituals and seasonal festivals in which the entire community or that part of it associated with the particular ceremony ... This drama is processional and operatic combining the arts of singing, music, dancing, miming, and narration or declamation. This 'drama' enacted by villager or tribal group is a part of the African cultural heritage that has come down the centuries through oral tradition... the rhythm of the legend or story is therefore from that of western drama.... A protracted dance or song or narration is absorbing in itself without the European impantience to get on with the story. It is therefore fatal to judge traditional African drama by European standards and it is un-African to want to replace indigenous operatic and ritual drama by 'straight' drama.....(23)

This could be seen as an oversimplication. Perhaps Ramsaran should have isolated specific examples of this 'traditional drama' to illustrate his claim. It is alright to distinguish 'formal' or 'straight' drama from experiences. Saying that African drama is intimately connected with religious rituals and seasonal festivals is not enough nor satisfactory. It is vague since it does not indicate whether this drama has its own life within these 'rituals' and 'festivals' or not. What do the villagers or tribal groups enact? What does he mean by 'rhythm of the legend or story'? Is the 'absorbing' effect of a 'protracted dance or song' enough definition of a drama? In the words of Ruth Finnegan what is available in Africa defies any verbal definition because it is not a dramatic form, but merely some 'dramatic or quasi-dramatic phenomenon.(24) For E.T. Kirby the situation is even worse as there is no tradition of drama' in Africa.(25) To Finnegan it is 'dramatic form' that is important to an understanding of drama whereas to Kirby it is the 'situational interaction expressed in dialogue between characters'. Without admitting to do so, they each provide their own definition of drama by suggesting some form of yardstick for measuring African performance in order to establish its theatricality. What they are trying to do is an impossible task for as Martin Esslin warns:

> definitions are valuable and essential, but they must never be made into absolutes, if they are, they become obstacles of organic development of new forms experiments and invention. It is precisely because an activity like drama has fluid delimitations that it can continuously renew itself from sources that had hitherto been regarded as trying beyond its limits.(26)

What we need perhaps is not so much a definition 'criteria' for not just identifying drama in African performance but the performance's theatricality.(27) These will be special criteria. Special not because they deal with an inferior cultural phenomenon but because they understand the milieu in which the performance in question grows.

Ramsaran, Finnegan and Kirby base their discussion of drama on form, which according to Herbert Read is 'the shape imparted to an art fact by human intention and action.(28) This form comes out of various processes ranging from the way man relates to the material basis of his life to the psychological make-up of the form's creators. It does not come about by itself and independent of other aspects of human life as the concept of 'art for art's sake" would want us to believe. If Ruth Finnegan and E.T. Kirby have problems in finding indigenous African drama, it is because this fact seems to elude them. It is not just the presence of the so called 'elements of drama' that establishes drama's existence in a place, but why they come together. Rotimi touches on this when he looks at 'drama within a cultural setting'. (29) He recognizes that drama exists in context. Although it may begin 'in the make-believe, in play acting of children' or 'in the ritual of a people', it is not necessarily 'ritual of a primitive people or religion'.(30) Drama might have primitive beginnings in the sense that the desire to act or to impersonate is inborn in man. To put it in Aristotle's words, 'the instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures.'(31) The knack to imitate, to enact there is not a follow up to the development of civilization.

The assertion that drama exists in context needs elaboration. By context we mean the situation in which particular 'human intention and action' take place. Such a situation will be created by a specific community (or indeed society) with its own conventions to be observed and to guide the life style of its members. These conventions are decided either implicitly or explicitly by the said community and not by some outside force. Events can sometimes disturb this seeming status quo; things like invasions (whether in the form of evangelism or civilization or education) may quite forcefully change what norms are to pass for conventions. We cannot force conventions from one society onto another in our discussion of the latter's practices unless there is evidence to suggest diffusion of ideas from one to the other.

A notion can be culturally bound, but it can also go beyond cultures. The notion of 'enactment' transcends geographical as well as cultural barriers. What differ are the conventions that establish its nature in a particular community as well as distinguish child play or everyday make-believe from formal performance which embodies 'enactment' within itself.

Ruth Finnegan says that apart from the Bushman plays described by C.M. Doke what are available as dramatizations in Bantu Africa do not have an independent existence.(32) They are found in 'rituals like initiations and funeral rites'. And because of this she does not bother to discuss them. By implication she leaves them out because they are religious behaviour rather than art. For her, religious activity cannot co-exist with art.

How much of this is typical of western thought can be shown by quoting van Gennep who says;

> As we move downward on the scale of civilization... we cannot fail to note an ever-increasing domination of the secular by the sacred. We see that in the least advanced cultures the holy enters nearly every phase of a man's life. (33)

We do not dispute these ideas about the religiosity of most African indigenous performances. What we question is the belief that ritual and art do not co-exist. This is particularly so when we fully understand the relationship between ritual and drama. Jane Harrison defines ritual as 'a re-presentation or a pre-presentation, or a re-doing or pre-doing, a copy or imitation of life always with a practical end', whereas 'art is also a representation of life but cut loose from immediate action.(34) The two being separated from each other as stages in a process of growth which starts with real life and ends in art. Ritual is what bridges them. In the ritual stage the activity that takes place has no audience, everybody present participates actively. Only when the end result of the ritual alters accompanied by the presence of an audience aiming to observe the representation in its own right does art come into being.(35) What we get from Jane Harrison is a transitional theory which insists on the evolution of drama from ritual. This evolution is not a mutation in the form of a growth, but a death of some kind; for drama becomes in the presence of some form of husk vacated as it were by ritual. A few examples from Africa would dispute this process of metamorphosis. Some people would argue that:

> an artistic form (in Africa) can and did exist simultaneously with religious activity and that the relationship is more accurately described as mediation rather than transformation.(36)

Such a characteristic has baffled many a student of African drama world over. The contention here is that art and ritual do co-exist. In this, entertainment which is normally associated with art appreciation and enjoyment are not necessarily conceptualized as irreligious and as impossible in 'serious behaviour'. The understanding of ritual in the west does not seem to take this into account. When applied to the African experience it therefore becomes doubtful and inadequate as a basis for study of such experience.

The co-existence of entertainment and ritual or religious ceremony makes the performance share the responsibility of the religious activity or rite. This is why

> African theatre is functional in the sense that it serves a purpose within communities and cultures (a task) much greater than simply that of entertainment or diversion. (37)

If this sharing is not at the level of the global intention of the activity, the art at least fulfils a role towards that goal. A ritual could be aimed at marking the graduation of an initiate from the group of young girls into puberty and therefore adulthood, at the same time embody a dramatic performance within itself geared at teaching a specific role that she is going to play after the graduation. Throughout such a dramatic performance both participants and spectators also look upon it as some form of entertainment. When we talk about 'functionalism' in indigenous African performances we should be aware of this dual role.

Creativity in such an atmosphere cannot be simply left to the individual. Nor can it all be a communal activity. Depending on the role of the performance being envisaged will a group or an individual work on creating a dance, a mask, a mosquerade, a sequency of movements and even a song. What we are proposing here is that the method of creativity in indigenous performance is pegged to the nature of the function that the artifact is supposed to fulfill in the whole ceremony. For instance, in Nyau (from Malawi and Zambia) the masquerade into which a novice is pushed to be introduced to the masqueraders' world is constructed by the whole group; and during the initiation ceremony the novice is taught, by participation how to do this.(38) On the other hand, individual masquerades which appear individually and even outside the initiation ceremony depend on individuals' artistry for their masks so one finds certain individuals achieving fame and popularity for their ability to produce 'spectacular' masks.(39)

An instance of a typical African theatrical performance may be met in a girl's initiation ceremony from Malawi. Initiation ceremonies are common in Africa. Very often, if not always, they serve the purpose of preparing, and instructing novices for a life further up in the social scales of society. For instance graduating from childhood into adolescence or from maidenhood to motherhood etc. Many students of drama have looked at the whole ceremony as theatre. We contend that such generalization clouds the issue. Rather one ought to look very closely at the ceremonies. Very often one finds that within the ceremony there are moments when proceedings take a more pronounced theatrical appearance. In other words, one finds that it is possible to talk of 'vignettes' or 'playlets' rather than treating the whole ceremony as theatre. The girls' initiation ceremony Chinamwali from the Lomwe of Malawi has a dance called Nyongolo. It is a dance-drama basically, through which elderly women complement the verbal instructions that initiates receive during the initiation period. A lesson against promiscuity may be given by actresses, properly costumed and enacting the roles of a nude woman almost being raped by a 'man'. The whole episode would be accompanied by a song which carries a verbal warning and commentary on the little sketch done before the initiates.(40)

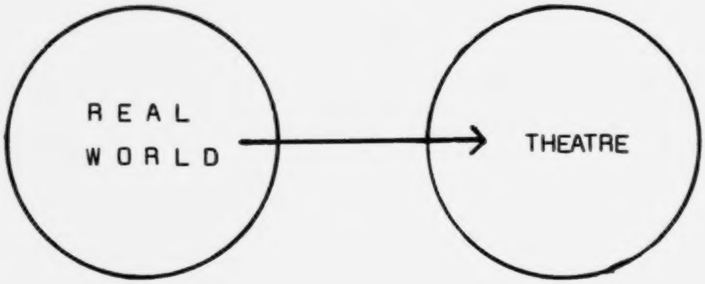
Before treating indigenous performance as theatre we must distinguish between a 'dramatic experience' and 'theatre'. Put simply the 'dramatic experience' is lived through by an individual who temporarily suspends disbelief and in so doing believes that he can be transformed into a new being. Most African ceremonies, festivals and rites depend on this suspension of disbelief. People submit to them because their societies believe that whoever undergoes them comes out a new person or a cleansed person.

However, such suspension of disbelief by itself does not give rise to theatre. Neither does the resulting transformation bring it about. The transformation that takes place must be enhanced by some means which embody within themselves the qualities of the spectacular for theatre to be. This is a transformation in which the actor must not be lost in the character into whom he has transformed himself; the action he engages in must not be sensed as reality but as theatre.(41) In other words there must be a performance. In this respect 'drama' is the experience whilst theatre is the means through which it is articulated by the individual undergoing transformation for the benefit of some observers. This enhancing of the dramatic experience is done through various signs taken from the world of those involved either directly or as observers. This means that such signs will vary from place to place or even from time to time. Lionel Gossman says that these 'signs ... are organized in a system that it is the way they are used that distinguishes different theatrical schools and traditions.(42) Ideally then one should understand a people's theatre best when one has a mastery of their culture.

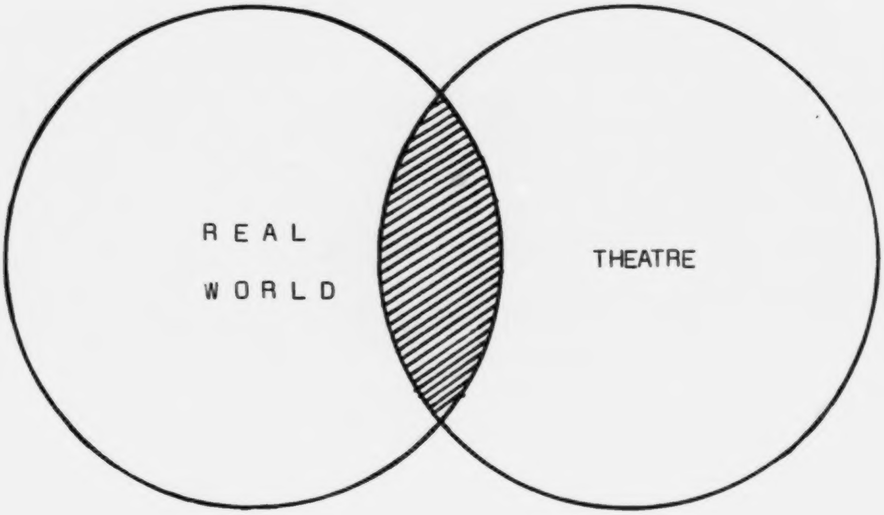
The theatricality of these festivals, ceremonies and rites depends on whether they can be classified as 'performances'. We can establish this by assessing the following; how the people involved in them view themselves with regard to the activity as well as to those who stand around them as spectators and what actually goes on in the ceremonies. If the ceremonies are performance how do people actually perform them? In other words, what do they bring to the performance to enhance its creation? These questions seek to establish if the performance is the organizing principle in the ceremonies. It is this that brings to the fore the aesthetic in theatre.

At this juncture it is imperative to reiterate that the distinction between a work of art and the real world commonly made in the west is difficult to discern in the African experience. In African traditional life these two are not marked out by separate existences. They, in fact, do co-exist side by side in one life experience. Diagramatically our argument may be shown thus:

A. NORMAL 'WESTERN' ESTABLISHED OUTLOOK



B. THE AFRICAN TRADITIONAL OUTLOOK



Soyinka has put this in the following words:

> Theatre . . . is one area . . . in which man has attempted to come to terms with the spatial phenomenon of his being.(43)

The 'spatial vision of theatre' is not yet contracted into purely physical acting areas on a stage as diagram A suggests. It is still a 'symbolic arena for metaphysical contests'.(44) In diagram A the two are separated from each other. Theatre feeds on the 'real world' without necessarily giving back anything in return. In this conceptualization the onlooker is capable and encouraged to look at the two as separate. In diagram B however, there is an area of co-existence in which the functional nature of theatre takes root. The onlooker at one point looks at the two as separate entities, but at another he sees them merge and feed on each other - theatre borrowing signs from the real world whilst at the same time being of service to it through its overt functional qualities. The co-existence of of art and natural phenomena spelt out here explains why it is possible to have entertainment within a funeral situation. It also makes it very difficult to see the 'transformation' said to be fundamental to drama when we look for it in African indigenous theatre.

On one level African ceremonies are loaded with ritual significance. This is what most studies of festivals, ceremonies and rites have stressed. Because such studies stress 'function' rather than 'performance', the aesthetic qualities embedded in the ceremonies have not been fully recognized. This has been so in spite of acknowledging that most of the action in these ceremonies is advanced through song, dance and mime among other things. On another level we find that performance is the organizing principle in them. The people who are not undergoing either initiation or the 'cleansing', in a therapeutic performance for instance, talk of the ceremonies as 'dance'. In fact both occasions are referred to as 'dance'. When a girl is to be 'initiated', people refer to her as 'going to be danced'.(45) Preparations for these ceremonies involve finding inter alia the right costumes, properties, musical instruments and indeed professional singers and drummers. All these are sought to enhance both the aesthetic and the functional aspects of the ceremonies.

The relationship of the people to the ceremonies depends on what part they are to play in them. For instance in an initiation ceremony the novices being initiated cannot be said to be there for their own entertainment. They believe, or at least they will have been told, that the initiation ceremony will see them through to a different and new experience. For them the ritual aspect of the ceremony is not accompanied by entertainment even when it is obvious.

On the other hand officials and attendants at the initiation ceremony have a different relationship to the ceremony. Because of the job they have, to further the beliefs of the people, they see the ceremony not only as a celebration, but a necessary event to be gone through by all young people. On this score the ceremony is ritual, but when the 'vignettes' are performed and the 'instruction' is taken over by actors or actresses of such playlets they become part of the audience. At this point, just like other spectators, they wait to be entertained.

The 'patient' in the therapeutic ceremony has to revoke a special relationship with the ceremony. As a sick person the experience must be real. But his treatment demands that he be ready to play a part at certain times in order for the ceremony to proceed towards its completion. So even if he is deeply engrossed in getting treatment, he has to keep one eye open, as it were, in order to respond appropriately to the demands of the ceremony. In such a situation the so called 'possession' has to be qualified as 'semi-trance' not complete possession. For even in the possessed state the patient responds aesthetically to the music and drumming that build him up to this state of being. Once again then the world of art co-exists with the real one.

What we have been labouring to say here is that what goes on in these ceremonies is both ritual and theatre. Ritual elements are summed up in the overall intentions of those who initiate the ceremonies in an attempt to reconcile man and his environment. Theatre surfaces as part of the actual fulfilment of these intentions. In this respect ritual is bigger than theatre. But the two are not exclusive of each other. The relationship of the various people surrounding these ceremonies to the ceremonies themselves is double-faced. Whilst fulfilling ritual calls they also in a very self-conscious way 'stage' activities specifically meant for an audience. This is an audience which shares the ambivalent attitude just described towards the ceremonies. It is because of this aspect that such ceremonies can also be seen as performances.

People employ costumes, make-up, masks, music, dance and mime in these performances. In some ceremonies make-up is used both on initiates and figurines employed in the ceremony.(46) Masks are not unknown in certain instances. The well known Nyau cult is a masquerade rooted, as spectacle, in the use of masks and make-up.(47)

Most ceremonies are performed at specially selected places. For instance most initiation ceremonies are carried out away from the village in an open clearing for most of the performance. Therapeutic performances seek open grounds too, though not as secluded as the former. The stage in both cases is the inside of a circle that audiences create as they surround the performers.

Here then we may talk of 'theatre-in-the-round'. Such an arrangement allows the impromptu role playing that joins the formal stages of the ceremonies without too much fuss. It also allows maximum concentration amongst the audience as they sing songs together. Soyinka talks about the discipline of such an audience:

> Any individual within the 'audience' knows better than to add his voice arbitrarily even to the seductive passages of an invocatory song, or to contribute a refrain to the familiar sequence of liturgical exchanges amongst the protagonists. The moment for choric participation is well-defined, but this does not imply that until such a moment, participation ceases.

If there is need to participate in the dancing going on, it is into the middle of the circle that dancers go. Where the action of the lead performer depends on the support of an audience. In a therapeutic performance the patient's ability to transfer into a 'trance' state depends on the strength or power of music, singing, drumming and clapping of hands around him. The greater the musical 'din' the more the chances of his achieving the desired goal. In other words the 'venue', the 'stage' and the positioning of the audience described here support his role play.

When we talk of role play in these ceremonies we confine ourself to that which is consciously gone into towards fulfilling the 'performance' aspect of the ceremonies only. In an initiation ceremony for instance, we only look at it in the said 'vignettes', in which there is no doubt about the players' and audience's ability to distinguish the real from the fictive in their minds.

In the case of the patient in a therapeutic performance things are not so clear cut. As we have said already the patient is both 'real' and imaginary as demanded by the performance. Joe de Graft talks of 'the awesome relationship between role-playing and sympathetic magic' as illustrated by a voodoo substitution sacrifice. Of role-playing in this he says that:

> The decision to enter into an act of impersonation is always a conscious one, more or less, requiring some kind of physical and psychological preparation. But the form of the impersonation, in terms of what the impersonator does and how he does it, is sometimes not possible consciously to determine.(49)

Wanting to be healed and also being aware of the means by which this can be achieved the patient in a therapeutic performance consciously submits to the procedures of the ceremony by responding to the music, drumming and incantations of the medicine man to the point of possession necessary for his taking on the characteristics of the 'spirits' that 'haunt' him in preparation for their exorcism. Such procedures in some societies, as Joe de Graft says, involve the use of 'potions, drugs, spells, chanting and powerfully rhythmic drumming'.(50) In most cases the medicine man who also has to reach the point of 'trance' before he can treat his patient may actually stop the singing and drumming if they are not powerful enough. In other words he engages in a 'conscious selection and shaping of creative elements' in order to enhance the ultimate goal. This again points to the kind of role-playing that goes on. It is difficult to determine the demarcation line between 'acting' meant to lead to 'possession' and 'possession' itself. But both are there or at least we are made to believe 'possession' takes place.

Chapter Two

2. THEATRE AND SOCIETY IN AFRICA

By identifying the nature of indigenous African drama Ramsaran opened the debate on what should constitute contemporary African drama.(1) Unfortunately by this time to the 'enlighted' African drama was seen first as a literary genre rather than the performance. Besides this, discussion of African literature at the time centred around what was to constitute the concerns of its writers. Themes rather than 'form' received a good deal more attention than they deserved at such a formative stage. One might see all this as part and parcel of the colonial legacy which had excluded the possibility of an indigenous drama ever being there.

Very little evidence exists on 'African directed' experiments to forge what may possibly pass for a genuine contemporary African dramatic form. The experiments of the Ghana Theatre Workshop do not seem to have had counterparts from other parts of the continent until more recently from Central Africa.

Besides such conscious efforts to create an aunthentic and meaningful African drama, there are others like those from South Africa which are born out of the political climate prevalent in the country rather than pure experiment with Africanity.

Let us return to the concerns of African writers' debate to see what it has contributed towards shaping an aesthetics for African drama. This debate centres around art and commitment. Those engaged in it seek to answer the question 'what is the role of the African writer in his society?' Several people have attempted to answer this question. Here we shall only bring out a few representative views rather than try the impossible task of wrestling with all.

The question of 'art and commitment' in Africa is concerned with what people deem to be the function of art in society. In Africa this subject is everyone's concern. Politicians, clergymen and educationalists have a special interest in it. Either they covetously ally themselves to the arts in their work or suspiciously monitor their development to check any elements of subversion that may grow into them. Discussing the aims and functions of art outside the creative process is one thing and fulfilling certain objectives within the social process is another. It is this distinction that gives us the difference between the critic (no matter how bad) and the artist. In African theatre this distinction is not an easy one to make because very often the artist is found to play the role of the critic too.

Today there is general agreement on the contention that art should serve a purpose in society in Africa. This could be why there is so much interest shown by so many people. But perhaps this is not as important to mention as a discussion of what the nature of this purpose or function is and how artists are expected to go about it. The prescriptive tone of our discussion is the nature of the debate that is going on amongst all those concerned.

It is common practice amongst artists and critics to confine their discussions of the development of theatre in Africa to literary works. Even in these there is yet another distinction drawn between works written in vernacular languages and those written in foreign languages (like English and French). It is the latter works that have received detailed attention in scholarship.(2)

2.1. STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

Although we shall be talking of the struggle for independence in Africa as if it took place in the various colonies at the same time, it is important to bear in mind this was not so. We do this as a matter of convenience. The struggle period covers a wide span of time. For some countries it was a short struggle, whilst for others it was a long one. For instance the beginnings of the struggle in Malawi can be traced back to 1915 when John Chilembwe led an abortive uprising against the colonial government, yet independence did not come until 1964. In Ghana the struggle started about the same time, but her independence came much earlier than Malawi's in 1957. The same is true of Nigeria whose 'real' struggle matured in 1920 leading to independence in 1960. The fact that one country rose early to challenge colonialism does not guarantee early independence. Here, we assume that the fight for independence was a common experience and that it took more or less the same shape in British Colonial Africa. This being the case we propose to treat cultural developments of this era as common to the whole area.

In terms of the development of creative writing and theatre in this period people have tended to oversimplify matters. Although we talk of a unified front of nationalists we must acknowledge the difficulties this front underwent before becoming an entity - particularly those arising from tribalism and differing cultural values. Of course, faced with a common enemy in colonialism, politicians were able to overcome them. And as Gerard shows, artists - particularly writers - had a part to play in this process of unifying the people.(3) Theatre too, in its own small way made a contribution to this.

Contemporary theatrical activity in Africa continues to be monitored and sometimes even controlled by forces outside the theatre itself. As we have said already, many people show interest in theatre. The presence of such people inevitably directs theatrical developments beyond the expectations and sometimes the scope of those who are strictly speaking 'professionals' in the area, namely, playwrights, directors and even actors. Quite apart from showing us how 'important' theatrical activities are on the continent this wide, ranging patronage has a telling effect on the theatrical conditions within which playwrights and directors work.

Theatrical developments of the colonial period clearly show that there were two societies involved in theatre activity. There was that of the white experts who were trying to create a special theatre for the Africans. And then there was that of Africans who both received and tried to put into practice ideas from the said experts. A drama conceived by whites was being created for a society of blacks. It is only when Africans acquired independence that drama began to grow together with other things to make their new society. This time drama formed part of the culture of the people. The people inherited it as it were. This process of inheritance took place during the period of struggle preceding the acquisition of political independence. And it was manifest in the way culture was brought in as one of the fronts of the fight for liberation. This was evidenced in the songs specially created to support freedom fighters, and later in the writing that came out of Africans.

During the struggle there was exceptional unity amongst the people as tribal conflicts gave way to nationalism. We might add here that throughout the colonial period - quite apart from tribal conflicts amongst Africans - there had also grown some form of class distinction between the educated and the uneducated masses of the villages. Although these two groups come together in the struggle just mentioned, they did so motivated by different experiences. The masses' struggle was based on refusal to be exploited by the colonial powers in the economic and political sense. The educated African who formed a group of elites within the African population - being mostly teachers or clerks in the civil service or mission schools - gave Africa her first writers. And as several people have pointed out these joined the struggle out of frustration:

> The intellectuals, the elites, the middle classes which included most writers ... found themselves not quite accepted in the world of the conquerers. Rejected by their counterparts in the white structure, their humanity sometimes denied in the name of

> race, they were as it were thrown back
> to the masses. They started to reclaim
> their past, often with bitter nostalgia.(4)

Having enjoyed some acceptance and appreciation from the colonial masters for their achievements in aping them, they found it intolerable to be denied equal status with the whites on racial grounds. It is at this point that the educated 'elite' joined the masses in fighting colonialism and demanded total independence from foreign rule.

The product of this union culturally was a quick recognition of the amount of damage done to indigenous traditional life and the need to rehabilitate it. For the African elite this was one way of endearing himself to the masses who would have otherwise viewed his political involvement with suspicion. Expression of this union came through the songs created during the struggle. These were created *en masse* and they were sung likewise. Kwame Nkrumah recalled vividly some years after independence in Ghana how culture joined the fight for liberation in his country in the 1950s:

> Comrades we have come along way up the road
> since the fight I can hear once again
> the singing of the masses in the evenings
> outside the prison walls. I can feel once
> more the violent throbbing of my heart as
> the blood of inspiration runs through my
> veins and steels my nerves for the tough
> struggle ahead. I can see how the party
> comrades toiled day and night to keep the
> party flag flying in those days of severe
> trial.(5)

This phenomena was not confined to West Africa. In East and Central Africa the case was the same:

> In the struggle for Independence the peasants and often the urban workers worked their ancestral gods for strength to fight the foe. They adapted traditional rhythms, songs and dances to new needs of the struggle.(6)

These 'traditional rhythms, songs and dances' were brought into the fight in order to unify, inspire, steal and encourage the politicians and the people as a whole. The emphasis in the struggle was on the masses rather than individuals, so the so called elites of the time had no choice but to join incognito. Creative writing during this critical period seemed to disappear altogether. It was probably so because the whole process of publishing and promoting writing was very much in colonial hands. It is only in the theatre that creative work seemed to have continued. This is so because theatre's existence does not have to depend on the published text. Another reason could be that interest in theatre was not confined to 'highly educated people'. Others with fairly little western education felt confident enough to engage in theatre activity. In Nigeria, this activity even joined the fight against colonialism as evidenced by the work of Hubert Ogunde.(7) If ever there were any works being published they would have addressed themselves to the struggle. This would have been either in favour of colonialism, (some aspect of it) or against it. If the former were to be the case, then the writers would have been branded as 'stooges' and perhaps suffer at the hands of the people in many ways (not excluding physical violence). If the latter was the case, and even if they highlighted the vagaries of colonialism in their writing, artists would not have done it in the same direct manner of the politicians. Being at the mercy of colonial presses and publicity they probably would not have succeeded anyway.

What is important here about art during the period of struggle is that firstly it became the Africans' own brain child rather than responses to European suggestions and tutoring, secondly, tradition and history became important in as far as they provided sources of inspiration and style of presentation (which ironically as we have shown earlier on was the colonialist approach to drama in Africa), and thirdly all people were united in the purpose of opposing colonialism. And the little literature that was produced was mostly in the vernacular.

2.2. POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

Themes

Although it is a straight forward thing to chart out the development of writing during the post-colonial period in West Africa, the same is not true in East Africa and Central Africa. Indeed we do find identical phases, themes or styles of writing in the three areas, but they do not occur in the same order. With the growth of African literature in West Africa grew critical awareness around it. This was given expression in print - most effectively in journals like Presence Africaine, Transition and Black Orpheus. Through such publications people in the rest of the continent got informed. Up and coming writers in East and Central Africa therefore, in a manner of speaking, short-circuited the life cycle gone through by their colleagues from West Africa. They had the chance of learning, rather than living through certain artistic experiences, from these older friends. The same thing could be said to be happening in Zimbabwe at the moment. Instead of following the steps we are going to chart down presently, as the pattern of development in African literature, Zimbabweans are calling upon established playwrights like Soyinka and Ngugi wa Thiong'o to teach them 'the latest thing' in theatre practice. What all this means is that whilst we can easily track down the development of Chinua Achebe's views on the writer and his role in society (besides the way these views are put into practice in his writing) - changing from a romantic writer, through social commentator, to a pamphleteer of the Biafran cause in the Nigerian civil war - we cannot do the same for people like Ngugi wa Thiong'o or any post-independence writer from East and Central Africa. The latter embody all the stages of such development in one epoch of their writing. For instance, within the early work and ideas of Ngugi wa Thiong'o we trace both romantic reminiscence and disillusionment in the present as well as arguments for writing with the masses in mind. Whilst his The River Between idealises the past and condemns colonialism, in his play The Wound in the Heart (from about the same time) he addresses himself to brutal realities of life experienced by returnees from Mau Mau detention camps instead of dwelling on some imagined rosy and unadulterated celebration of Mau-Mau victory and promises of a good future. As early as 1963 he could suggest the formation of a travelling theatre at Makerere and thus bring theatre to the people.(8) The work coming out of East and Central Africa fuses into one period those experiences which West Africans have gone through and dealt with in their writing over a period of years. By implication we are saying that what Soyinka and Ngugi wa Thiong'o have outlined as the pattern of development in African literature only holds true up to a point chronologically and geographically. Theatre developments in Central Africa illustrate this point.

Immediately after achieving independence the unity of the people mentioned earlier on remained intact. Complaints about colonialism were replaced by concern with rehabilitation of African dignity and consolidation of the nation. From politicians come calls to rejuvenate and to revive, a cultural heritage once denigrated and now in danger of disappearing. In Zambia (almost ten years after Independence) President Kaunda still talked along these lines when in 1973 he said:

> ... our culture, formerly debased and denigrated has been raised to the status which it has always deserved. Gone are these days, for instance, when foreigners looked down upon the drum. Today the Zambia drum adds to dignity and ceremony.(9)

To get to this position the Government of Zambia had to set up in 1966:

> ... a Directorate of Zambia Cultural services whose objectives were basically to foster the interests of all institutions

> and organisations whose aims were directed towards the promotion and preservation of culture in Zambia, and to provide and to recommend where appropriate financial and other assistance which the Government may approve.(10)

Amongst the projects to be launched by this Directorate was the support and development of a Zambia Arts Trust whose duty was to promote 'drama, dance and music with Zambian flavour'. The Trust had already been in existence since 1964 when it presented a pageant during the country's Independence celebrations.(11)

The role of the writer in this period was put most succinctly by Wole Soyinka in Transition when he said that:

> Independence in every instance had meant an emergency pooling of every mental resource. The writer must, for the moment at least... postpone that unique reflection on experience and events which is what makes a writer - and constitute himself into a part of that machinery that will actually shape events.(12)

In practical terms this was manifest in the dominant theme which tried to redress the negative interpretation of African cultures done by colonialism. In Chinua Achebe's words:

> This theme.... was that African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and, above all, they had dignity.... The writer's duty is to help his people regain this dignity and self respect by showing them in human terms what happened to them, what they lost....(13)

Most African writers have their bases in academic institutions. Here they do not necessarily get tuition in creative writing, but they meet varying points of view regarding what direction African writing should go. From this, we can speculate, they get the idea of commiting their writing to something. Rather than concern himself with helping Nigerians to regain their lost dignity and self respect, Soyinka felt an urge to warn his people against self-indulgent leadership as he wrote A Dance of the Forest which he says:

> was triggered by independence, by my knowledge of the leaders who were about to take over the reins of the country. I realized that after Independence some of those new rulers were going to act exactly like their forebears did, just exploit the people. I was interested in taking another look at history and saying: The euphoria should be tempered by the reality of the internal history of oppression... In other words, I thought that Independence should be a sobering look at history, not just euphoria, and so on.(14)

In other words, Soyinka saw the writer as 'the special eye and ear, the special knowledge and response' who should play the prophets role in his society. Although Soyinka seemed to acknowledge the importance of having a sense of history as a writer, he, like Mphahlele, was not for over-romanticizing the African past. At the famous Dakar conference in 1963 Mphahlele verbalized this quite bluntly by saying the following words:

> who is so stupid as to deny the historical fact of negritude as both protest and a positive assertion of African cultural values? All this is valid. What I do not accept is the way in which too much of the poetry inspired by it romanticizes Africa - as a symbol of innocence, purity and artless primitiveness. I feel insulted when some people imply that Africa is not

> also a violent Continent. I am a violent person, and proud of it because it is often a healthy human state of mind; someday I'm going to plunder, rape, set things on fire; I'm going to cut someone's throat; I'm going to subvert a government; I'm going to organise a coup d'etat; yes, I'm going to oppress my own people... I'm going to attack the black bourgeoisie... An image of Africa that only glorifies our ancestors and celebrates our "purity" and "innocence" is an image of a continent lying in state.(15)

Mphahlele's speech summarised the strongest objections to the line suggested by Chinua Achebe and all who stood for his views both in Anglo-phone as well as Franco-phone Africa. Such objections and those of Soyinka stemmed from a belief that

> literature springs from an individual's experience, and its effort to take in the whole man, it also tries to see far ahead, to project a prophetic vision, such as the writer is capable of, based on contemporary experience.(16)

Mphahlele pushed the argument further by bringing out the implied shift in emphasis from history to present more directly in his demand that 'contemporary experience' inform the future. Common to all these three writers however was their view of the artist as first of all an outsider holding a mirror to his society and secondly as a moral rudder to it. This marked a shift from romanticism to humanism. It also marked the break up of the union between politicians and writers. Where the former had political power and were interested in protecting their positions a direct consequent of the break was the creation of censorship procedures aimed at thwarting attempts made by any artist trying to grow his art in the direction Soyinka chose for his.

This break came slowly and very subtly. Whilst the politician started off by approving what writers were going, their patronage gave way to outright rejection. Upon receiving independence most governments rushed to build or form national monuments of culture or national troupe's and plans for national theatres (when money was available). Sometimes - like in the time of Nkhrumah in Ghana - even Institutes of Ideology were built 'to protect the nation' from reactionary views addressed against, not just the political set up of the country, but its cultural life too.

Pan Africanism was yet another brain child of the African politician. His calls to revive indigenous culture were usually dressed in global terms. For him the image that needed salvaging was not just a national one, but that of the whole continent.

Extending the humanist outlook of people like Soyinka and Mphahlele to a 'proletarian' one, Ngugi wa Thiong'o warned (as he still does today) in an essay entitled 'Towards a National Culture' that there was a danger in being overzealous about rejuvenating the past at the expense of emphasizing change in society.(17) He attacked what may be called a 'preservatory' aspect in artistic work and called for more committed attention to man's struggle, as he tried to come to terms with his environment, from writers. For Ngugi wa Thiong'o, the writer's commitment starts with understanding the position he holds in his society. And this involves stepping down from a bourgeois position that most African writers get into if they do not take care. For African writers:

> The temptation to remain in an ivory tower is ... great. But they must reject this false position or else they will be alienated from the living source of their inspiration. Truth and life in a struggle.(18)

Ngugi wa Thiong'o sees this struggle as a social crisis in which one 'can never be uncommitted'. This struggle, for the writer, goes beyond admonishing the politician or placing a mirror before society. If he confines himself to these objectives he fails. For in this he merely plays the role of a 'liberal referee'. And this is a role he must outlive, for he has played it for too long - since independence. Ngugi wa Thiong'o wants every African writer to be on the side of the majority too. This is a majority which he says is clamouring for change. This commitment goes beyond aesthetic . It even means creating the conditions necessary for the culture, to which artists contribute, to be enjoyed. Towards this end Ngugi wa Thiong'o will not spare anything. He claims not to be a pacifist. He has declared, in the past, that he does 'not condemn violence indiscriminately; for the oppressed have no option, but to use violence'.(19)

In practice all that is said above is not easy to follow, let alone to fulfill. Very few African writers have actually found themselves in this situation. We can only think of Christopher Okigbo and his direct involvement in the Nigerian civil war. Ngugi himself had to wait for almost a decade (1981) before he could create a theatre coming close to his ideals.(20) A result of his attempts at working with the people has been clashes with authorities in Kenya. His first production with the villagers of Kamiriithu in 1981 led to his detention and the banning of the play from further performance. More recently his second attempt to produce yet another play called 'Maitu Njugira' was thwarted by the government who refused a permit for performance at the National Theatre. The group he worked with was ordered to disband.

In all these suggestions or developments the African Politician is affected. Firstly he is affected by virtue of his being patron of cultural regeneration of his people. Secondly he is affected as he becomes a target of attack and accusation for misguiding and mismanaging the nation. And as many people have pointed out, it is at this point he directs his nation's attention towards pan-Africanism, away from his own internal failures. But the stubbornness and aggressiveness of writers persist to embarrasing proportion that he has to check their work by creating censorship procedures (legally or otherwise). This process of censorship becomes ever more necessary where the writers insist on communicating with the masses. In the theatre more than stopping a show, playwrights or directors have been detained. In Kenya (as we have said already) Ngugi wa Thiong'o lost his job as Professor at the University and got detained as well. Theatre in Africa, as the Guardian says, has become 'a symbol of a bitter cultural battle with important political undertones', consequently it cannot escape the politician's eye.(21)

We can sum up the major concerns of post-independence African literature as follows; rejuvenation and celebration of a romantic African past which leads to a reaction involving extrusion of realistic lessons for the present; pan Africanism encouraged by the politician in order to hide away his people from local concerns, and total "disillusionment" with the politics of the period; and realignment with the masses in their 'supposed' struggle for improved living conditions. In the theatre this is reflected firstly in the way playwrights choose themes, the way they write their plays and the language they work in; secondly in the kind of theatre coming up as a physical plant or structure - buildings and companies of performers. Around all these skirt a series of problems like censorship, publishing and lack of expertise.

Chapter Three

3. WHITHER AFRICAN THEATRE

3.1. DIRECTIONS

Theatre activity in Africa lacks basis because it has grown in circumstances that have produced nothing but confusion amongst her peoples. The economic, political and social atmosphere of colonial Africa left a great deal to be desired. Quite apart from the exploitative nature of colonialism, it brought about accompanying institutions and a class structure which on the whole only alienated educated Africans from their own cultural background and fellow Africans.

Colonialism in Africa split society into two basic groups namely; Europeans and Africans. The African group was further sub-divided into elites, proletariat and peasants or rural people. While it is true that not all Europeans enjoyed upper class or indeed middle class status in their home countries, in Africa they were all _bwanas_ by virtue of being white. Here they had their own exclusive ammenities provided for, to cater for their various needs. Recreation centres, hospitals, schools and shops were built along ethnic/racial lines. Facilities for whites were always superior to those meant for blacks. Very often they were even non-existent for the latter group.

Recreation facilities provided to Africans by colonialists encouraged the myth that a good life could still be had in spite of economic want. So whilst Africans suffered materially, white colonialists encouraged them to adopt western ways of enjoying leisure time. They provided beer halls and community centres to fulfill this goal. But as would be expected, this was often at variance with what politicized Africans deemed to be African needs. Very often where such facilities were provided they were turned into something else more immediately useful. For instance, the civil servants in Malawi turned a government built recreation centre into a primary school in order to combat a shortage of primary schools in the capital city.(1)

Where such recreation facilities existed they catered for African elite, made up of clerks and teachers rather than the labourers, house boys and dhobis nor the rural peasants left in the village. Such an elite aspired towards whiteman's life, so that most of their leisure time was spent on habits totally alien to an African way of life. Activities like film shows, ballroom dancing, beauty and dressing contests were amongst the most popular pastimes. All this bred its own type of theatre life. On the one hand it continued classroom drama acquired in the school, whilst on the other it developed a syncretic type of the meeting of African life and 'European' life.

Apart from the unsatisfactory government facilities, the church also provided another avenue through which theatre developed. Here it was more out of pedagogic reasons than sheer entertainment. But the mode of theatre that was encouraged followed that of the metropolitan centres of Europe. So the type of theatre that was to grow out of this avenue was still going to be strange to Africa. Its goals were not to develop out of African needs, but alien missionary ones.

Educational institutions have remained the main centres of theatrical developments on the continent. Perhaps, because of their need to impart as much liberal education as possible theatre activities, either as part of literature or theatre studies per se, have always existed in schools. We have already shown how the debate on the development of the African's aesthetic sense went on during the colonial period. Much as it left a great deal to be desired, its basic tenets are still evident today. Even after independence, and when emancipated Africans hold the reins of power, this aesthetic sense remains in colonial shackles. The need to really rediscover an African poetics remains ever present. Such a possibility lies with the continent's theatre practitioners more than anybody else. Unless they change their approaches to theatre; unless they understand who they are working for in theatre; unless they rediscover their African roots in the real sense, not just in an exotic sense this may never happen for yet a long time to come.

3.2. THEATRES AND COMPANIES

> There is no professional theatre in Nigeria, and the only theatre designed and equipped sic as such in the country belongs to the University College, Ibadan.(2)

One might look at this alongside Adedeji's claims about Alarinjo theatre from Nigeria as a guild of professional theatre practitioners.

Herein lies the problem of understanding African theatre. Banham has shifted his stand since he made the statement quoted above.(3) Hiw words, placed alongside Adedeji's claims however, show how wide the subject of African theatre is; and therefore how difficult it is to fully do it justice in study. The problem is even more complicated when one wants to explore an African poetics. Such a venture is best broached by looking at the way various people have gone into theatre practice itself. An attempt to wrestle with indigenous theatre practice has been gone into in Chapter two. Let us turn to contemporary practitioners operating in modern 'European' complexes. These of course spring from the colonial adventures of trying to educate the African in 'developed' art. Their base, as Banham says, is the school room more than anywhere else.

While lack of 'professional' theatre practice in Africa might be lamented by some individuals, one cannot help marvelling at the extent to which such educational institutions more than anyone else have advanced the search for an African poetics. Starting from within colonial bondage, they have - with time - come to see the need for evolving a theatre that is not only true but meaningful to Africa and her people.

The work of the William Ponty School in Senegal is a typical example of a colonial institution set up to produce an African elite completely alienated from its own people. It was not alone on the continent. A look at the early productions by the Arts Theatre Production Group at the University of Ibadan shows to what extent Europe dominated the scene in the fifties.(4) When one moves to East Africa, Makerere presents a similar picture.(5) The same is true of Central Africa.(6) Shakespeare, Broadway or West End successes seem to be the pattern for all beginners in African theatre.(7)

But as it is always, the measure of success in theatre comes through audience attendance and its responses to what it is offered. Molly Mahood lamented the absence of sufficient patronage at a production of The Gentle People by the Ibadan University Arts Theatre:

> It was sad that the students' own Dramatic Society did not get from the undergraduate body the support that such a good production deserved.(8)

Why did students not go in sufficient numbers to support the theatre company?

From Uganda Gerald Moore reported:

> The recent Macbeth at the National Theatre provides a good focus for a discussion of drama in modern Africa. There were those for whom the whole affair could be dismissed with a shrug - "Why will Africans try to do these things?" There were others who dwelt on the shortcomings of acting technique to the exclusion of any favourable comment whatever. Others again seemed ... worried by the sight of an African warrior asking "How far is't called to Forres?(9)

The questions raised here might not have been important at the time. But when they are viewed against the quest for an African aesthetics, one begins to see them differently. They were pertinent questions. The whole idea of doing Macbeth in Africa takes on different colours when one reads one Director's intentions in Zimbabwe (then racist Rhodesia):

> The background of the play with its main story line of bloodshed, murder and tyranny; the Elizabethan belief in witchcraft and sorcery .... are all amazingly close to the many tales of tribal warfare in this country. Macbeth's excesses, his tyranny and degeneration seemed to me to be a surprising parallel with the savage greatness of some of the early African Chiefs.(10)

This led to the production of 'an all-African Macbeth dubbed locally Blackbeth.'(11) The directors comment on Salisbury society's responses to this production are interesting, for in a sense - rather indirectly they touch on the Kampala experiences:

> The trouble with Macbeth in Rhodesia of course was that it became a political issue. To the African and his supporters it was a cultural challenge which had to succeed, and to their opponents it was a foregone disaster ..... the whole thing was a waste of time...... Africans could not possibly tackle Shakespeare.(12)

The question of developing theatre cannot be divorced from politics. The attitudes displayed in the comments made by whites stem from their racial and political stance vis-a-vis Africans. The African cultural struggle was political too! But perhaps more important still, and this ties with the director's own view, why do Macbeth in Africa? For whom are you doing it? The said director echoed Mahood's lament at Ibadan in the following words:

> As to the future of theatre in Central Africa, I do not know. In Salisbury Harare at least the difficult transitional period between amateur and

> professional theatre is just beginning. As yet, the theatre-going population is still too small to support a permanent professional company...(13)

African patronage and audiences have always perplexed people interested in theatre arts in Africa. David Cook and Miles Lee tried to understand the 'lack' of sophistication in African response to tragedy when they thought that Africans laugh where one least expects laughter when watching a play. From their observations generalizations have been made. It would also be interesting to know how much David Cook and Miles Lee actually knew about the socio-cultural background of their audience and if at all they could determine whether the said response derived from dramatic spectacle or the tragic story.

Michael Crowder has expressed worry about the Nigerian audience on another plane:

> The state of patronage and audience in Nigeria today is still one that gives cause for concern. The opening performance of Isiburu at the National Theatre ... was reported as having an audience of only three people. I attended a performance of the excellent production of Sizwe Bansi is Dead at the same theatre and found an audience of only sixteen half of them expatriate.... At the University of Lagos as we discovered during our FESTAC fringe festival we were able to pack the new auditorium for Herbert Ogunde, but our more "serious" presentations sometimes attracted only a handful.(14)

Here blame is placed on the audience. Theo Vincent refuses to place the blame on the audience. He says that it is the 'lack of a complex integrative function to produce spectacle which should be held responsible for the paucity of drama audiences in Nigeria'. In his argument he distinguishes two types of drama as having come up in the Nigeria theatre namely; popular drama and literary drama. The Sizwe Bansi is Dead production mentioned by Crowder above would fall under literary drama, whilst the Ogunde production witnessed during the FESTAC festival would be classified as popular drama. It is this popular drama that is successful in Nigeria (as a whole not just during FESTAC).(15) This success stems from the nature of popular theatre. Popular drama, Vincent argues, is simply geared towards 'entertainment - through themes and motives' which are contemporary to the audiences coming to watch it. The language used in it is 'raw, vibrant, witty often boldering on slap-stick - either vernacular or pidgin English'. The 'acting is naturalistic'. The 'plots are simple'. On the whole:

> A cross-section of the community enjoys and pays anything to see them. These plays tend to be integrative forces uniting the drama and the audience in one imaginative exploration and contemporary.(16)

Whatever sources they use, 'their meaning is not obscured'. Unlike all this the so called 'literary drama' is; 'elitist' in character. It is written in 'creative English by highly educated playwrights influenced by European theatre'. This drama usually makes 'serious intellectual demands on the audience'. The effect of all this is 'to alienate the audience'. This shows how compound a problem the whole development of African theatre is. Wherever this art form is growing, these problems must be faced in one way or another. And whatever discussion on 'art and commitment' are to be indulged in, they must extend beyond the question of the playtext and its themes to include the entire 'practice' of theatre. This should include theatre buildings.

The question of identifying a theatre aesthetics should include consideration of facilities that theatre practitioners would use in their work. Apart from actual writing, theatre practitioners have addressed themselves to this question. Governments are also engaged in providing some sort of facilities which they choose to label national theatres. No definite answer to what should constitute a proper African theatre seems to be discernible in all this. Only suggestions and experiments are made. While the playwright may be said to contribute towards this answer in the way he brings the African world into his creative works, there are the actors, the directors, the designers and architects who still have to join in the debate. Wole Soyinka, quite apart from being a playwright has also addressed himself to the question of buildings and setting up of proper companies with appropriate repertoires. He emphasizes that the question of structures should be taken seriously as it has a bearing on the 'art to which it must give birth'. Apart from Soyinka very few African artists have addressed themselves to this question. It is the expatriates who still find time to dedicate themselves to the development of a truly African drama that seem to have taken this challenge seriously. As early as 1963 in an article entitled 'Towards a True Theatre' Soyinka discussed this question and expressed disappointment at what passed for the National Theatre in Uganda at Kampala:

> The building itself is an embodiment of the general misconception of the word 'theatre'. Theatre, and especially a 'National Theatre', is never the lump of wood and mortar which architects splash on the landscape what was in Uganda . was nothing beyond a precious attractive building in the town centre ... a doll's house, twin brother to our own Nigerian National Museum.(17)

In a few words this was a white elephant which was not fulfilling any of the functions a 'National Theatre' would engage in. Perhaps there were none envisaged when the building was being planned. Soyinka thought the blame lay in leaving such developments in the hands of amateurs. He warned there were dangers in 'resigning the initial impetus for a creative institution to the death kiss of passionate amateurs'. In such people he saw no chances of creative imagination but 'imitativeness without the substance'. In this vein Soyinka spoke against productions which bore no significance to Africans.

Moving his attention to Ibadan, Soyinka attacked the location of the University's theatre which does not allow 'the actor and audience to liberate their imagination'.(18) He says:

> it.... astonishes him that those who planned the University had the sense to

> isolate the chapels from the distraction of the ungodly, but not the foresight to place the theatre beyond the rancousness of student lungs.(19)

Obvious things like acoustics and ventilation should have been thought about. But also in the same article he was quick to acknowledge and applaud the initiative of the students who wanted to take theatre to the people. He thought the members of staff leading the students were

> conscious.... of the static imposition of the Arts Theatre, and thus developed sufficient enthusiasm among the student dramatic team to undertake two highly successful tours of folk theatre.(20)

There are two things that come to mind immediately in this commendation, namely; a suggestion that dramatists should not feel compelled to live in unbecoming homes and that the best way of bringing theatre to the people is to create travelling troupes with a special repertoire for the audience expected on the tours. This sort of imagination was necessary if what he calls 'abortions' or 'boils' were to be checked in theatre development in Africa. He argued that even if people were in a rush to build they should at least aim for creative theatre. And if need be they could 'look for architectural inspiration among countries with approximate traditions and a longer professional history - or simply use that common ordinary gift of sense and refrain from employing mud-mixers and carpenters to design media which was eventually going to control or influence the creative intellect'.(21)

Although Soyinka did not pin the problems of Kampala and Ibadan down to cultural domination by the west, his examples of the kind of drama found there, and the kind of theatre African elites expected from directors would suggest it. The theatres of Uganda and Nigeria required freeing from some form of colonial hangover. The same is said of the National Theatre in Kenya. Although now and again indigenous plays by Kenyans are performed there, the bulk of the repertoire is imitations of the West End or Broadway. Ngugi wa Thiong'o cites a struggle going on between the management of the Kenya National Theatre and the local people over what should be put and encouraged there. He argues that such struggles only show 'the extent to which theatre and Kenyan cultural institutions are still in the hands of foreigners - mostly British - whose only aim is to promote British imperialist interests in the country'.(22) The question to be asked here is, 'who is to blame?'. Okot p'Bitek refuses to push the blame on to foreign shoulders. Delivering a lecture on "Indigenous Social ICCs" as part of the National Arts Festival of Zambia in 1967, he said that:

> There is a growing tendency in Africa for people to believe that most of our ills are imported, that the real source of our problems lies outside. We blame colonialists, mercenaries and neo-colonialists . Another, but contradictory, phenomenon is the belief that solutions to our ills can be imported. Foreign 'experts' .... economic advisers, military advisers and security advisers surround our leaders ... . I believe that most of our social ills are indigenous, that the primary sources of our problems are native. They are rooted in the social

> set-up, and the most effective solutions cannot be imported, but must be the result of deliberate re-organisation of the sources available for tackling specific issues.(23)

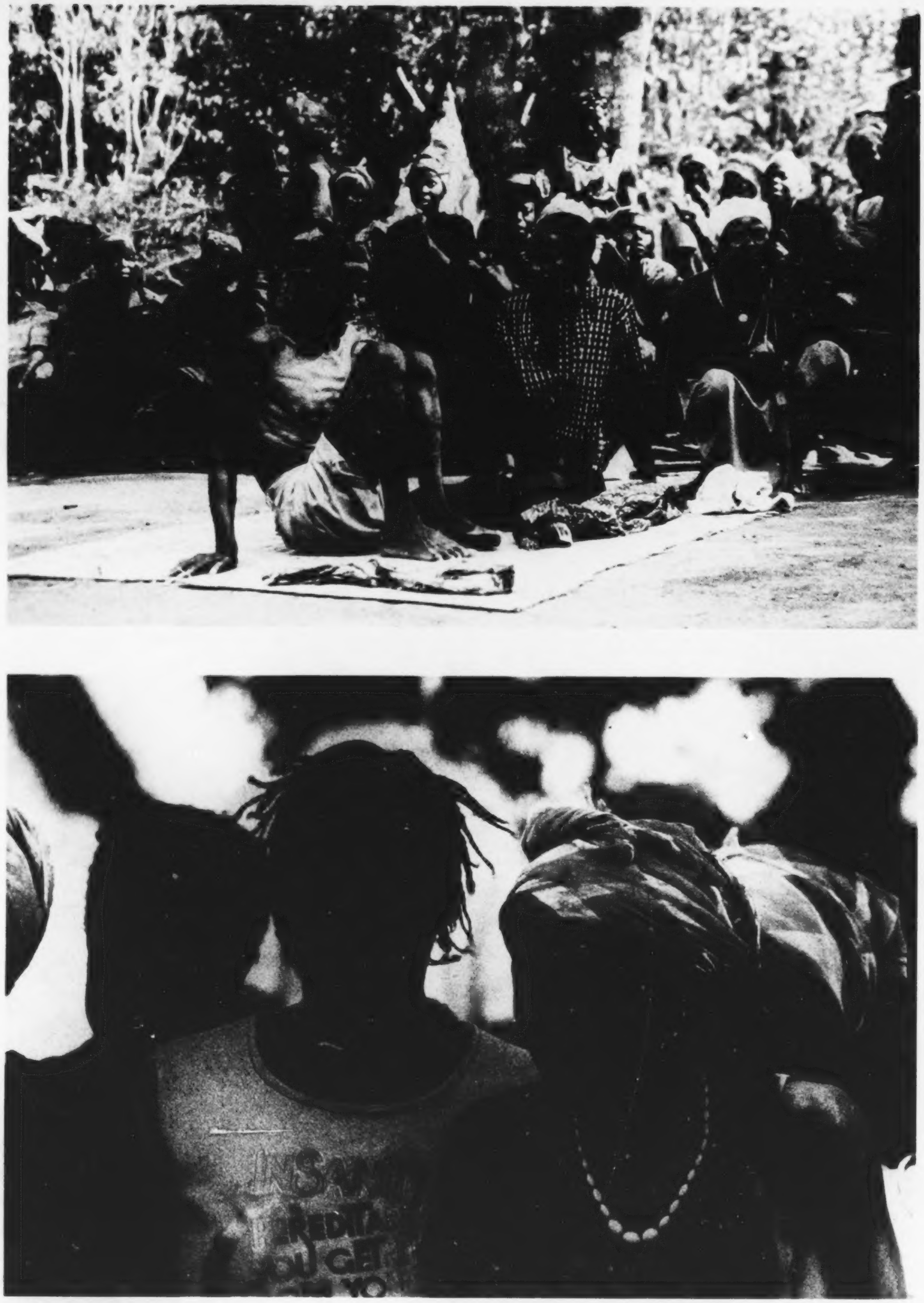
He argues that, re-organisation involves recognizing the role the masses can play in the development of the nation. It also involves re-educating politicians and the educated elite away from reactionary tendencies. Culturally this new education should involve redressing the process of colonial education and thus decolonising its products. Such a process will involve appreciation of indigenous art, music dance and ritual alongside production of works of art readily accessible to the masses. Theatre in this respect becomes what Soyinka applauds at Ibadan - Folk Theatre - or what Ngugi wa Thiong'o has been trying to create amongst the villagers of Kamiriithu. A theatre that is free from constraints of language and style, because it follows from the people themselves. Okot p'Bitek's cry is:

> Let the black man use his creativity and initiative to reconstruct his own society and institutions in his own style.(24)

Responses to this call have tended to confine themselves to creation of playtexts and companies geared towards meeting the cultural needs of the rural community. The question Wole Soyinka initiated in his discussion of the Kampala National Theatre, vis-a-vis, the question of theatre buildings, has not received as much attention as one would have expected. Whilst playwriting and directing plays have been becoming truly African, theatre architecture has persistently remained western in its outlook. Michael Etherton and Peter Magyer say that:

> A number of large and expensive theatres have just been completed in Nigeria. Who the theatres are for, how they were paid for, and who will ensure their continuing function, are obviously crucial questions in determining in general the true nature of the patronage and the audiences for the development of live theatre in Nigeria.
>
> Where, aesthetically and even functionally have these theatres come from? Probably from the contemporary international theatre for the staging of plays (dialogue drama), ballet, opera, musicals and variety performances, rather than from the non-formalized use of space for the oral tradition in performances of masquerades, festivals, dances and story-telling.(25)

The questions raised here point to the rift growing between playwrights on the one hand and theatre designers and architects on the other. On top of this they also point to the need to remember, firstly, where this art form is going in its growth and secondly, amongst which people it is doing so, i.e., the audience. In this way perhaps an African theatre aesthetics may be found.



Popular theatre - taking theatre to the people

Spectators play an important role in theatre for development

Chapter Four

4. TAKING THEATRE TO THE PEOPLE

The last chapter has talked among other things about problems of audience alienation and popularisation of theatre in Africa. This chapter will address itself to the concepts of 'travelling theatre' and 'taking theatre to the people'.

The idea of touring plays or indeed a travelling theatre in Africa today stems from three sources; one is the attempt to pattern modern theatre on traditional modes of theatre along the lines of the village entertainer who would walk from village square to village square or market to market providing skits, dance, dramas, folk tales etc.; the other one is the attempt by educational institutions trying to educate the rural and 'uneducated' masses into modern theatre; the third source is purely economical. Some groups travel up and down simply to make money.

From time immemorial African societies have always had traditional artists of one kind or another travelling from village to village displaying their art work. They have done this either at the invitation of important personages in the host villages or at the artists' own initiative. Wherever the former was the case, it was the duty of the host village to give the artist food, payment of some kind and accommodation during the period of visitation. Where the artist went into a village at his own initiative he still sought the assistance of the people of the village for material support.

Most prominent of such traditional artists have been dancers, actors, drummers and story-tellers. Our concern here is with those that are in the theatre arts. The Yoruba Alarinjo performers of Nigeria are one such group of artists. These, as Adedeji shows most convincingly, have always been a form of travelling theatre.(1) Besides such groups, and from a more recent time, there are the popular groups found in urban centres of West Africa and South Africa which travel from city to city or even country to country. These do so mostly out of a wish to make money. The Ghanaian Concert Party, The Nigerian Opera and the South African Musical Theatre all fall under this category. Very often these borrow from traditional as well as modern western theatre forms to create something new. There is also the other category of syncretic theatre forms like Malipenga and its variants of Beni, Mganda and Kalela from East and Central Africa, which started in urban centres, but gradually became indigenized and consequently rural. Descriptions of this type of theatre show quite clearly how its whole organization depends on the travelling aspect.

We may call these three groups i.e., the Alarinjo, Concert Party and Opera, and the syncretic drama, natural travelling theatres. Their development has not come about out of deliberate artificial action by some people wishing to promote a particular type of theatre. In total contrast to these groups there is work of University drama groups like that from Ibadan (Nigeria), Makerere (Uganda), Chikwakwa (Zambia) and Chancellor College (Malawi) which has come about as result of some university dons wishing to tour their productions amongst people living outside university campuses. The work of such people has been based on western drama. Some people would claim that its history in Africa may be traced back to the 17th century:

> The Travelling Theatre is not unique, of course: there is a record that Hamlet was performed in Sierra Leone in Shakespeare's lifetime.(2)

One wishes Stevenson provided more information on this claim. The suggestion here is that it was an English company that was providing this unique experience to West Africans. This association with British drama has been there for a long time. And it accounts for the paucity of an identifiable African theatre aesthetics. Perhaps if one looked more closely at the African indigenous travelling theatres, one might begin to see seeds of such an aesthetics.

4.1. TRADITIONAL TRAVELLING THEATRE

Like ordinary indigenous theatre African traditional travelling theatre groups of the Alarinjo types are both purely recreational whilst at the same time ceremonial. It is difficult to draw a line between performances fulfilling these two roles. When looked at from the point of view of the performers themselves there is probably no distinction between the two roles. But when looked at from the organisational angle one might find clear demarcation between the two roles. An Alarinjo performance held at the invitation of the Egungun Society usually follows a ritualistic manner - starting with a procession of some kind, singing chants in praise of their founder member and the Egungun Society; and finally paying a homage-visit to Sango's Shrine before the actual performance itself. The performance here serves a function in society. It becomes part of the process of bringing about harmony in life.

Alarinjo performances may be held at the invitation of the Oba, in which case they may be part of some celebration entertainment for some visitors. At another time they may be prompted purely by the performers themselves. In both cases the ritualistic approach to performance is dropped. The central feature in such performances are the financial or material gains expected by the performers themselves.

4.2. SYNCRETIC TRAVELLING THEATRE

As the word 'syncretic' suggests here, this is a theatre which has grown out of bringing together foreign elements of performance with indigenous ones. Once again this theatre travels not because somebody wants to teach someone theatre skills, but because people choose to get together and show each other their performances. The Malipenga from Malawi is an example of such a theatre. Malipenga dance-drama troups move from village to village at the invitation of one particular group. They come together and perform together.

Although it is a derivative of some western life style for the whole performance being an imitation of a western military band and colonial European social structure - its players have organized it in their own way; they use original indigenous instruments and they sing and play their own songs created in their own indigenous languages. The themes of such songs are relevant to the communities to which the performers belong. A result of this is that the travelling troupe is never a total stranger amongst its audience. The two groups (performers and audience) can understand each other. Because of this originality in manner of presentation and composition the derivative nature of Malipenga almost disappears. It being a take-off of the elite structure and its social mores, its relevancy to the common villagers takes more significance than would otherwise be the case. It therefore provides a possibility in the search for an African theatre aesthetics.

4.3. THE CONCERT PARTY AND THE YORUBA OPERA

So far we have looked at efforts made by European teachers at promoting theatre activity amongst Africans during the colonial period. What we have not done is to look at how Africans themselves actually learnt about theatre entertainment on their own, simply through their power of observation. The idea of taking theatre to the people in the contemporary sense can be traced back to this self taught theatre activity. The 'Concert Party' and the Yoruba Opera belong here. These are types of travelling theatres. Unlike the Alarinjo theatre or the Malipenga dance-drama, these forms depend on the leadership of particular individuals for their existence. So we have names like Bob Johnson and The Axim Trio, Hubert Ogunde, Alawada, Alaiya, and Gibson Kente to mention but a few of them.

In Ghana Ishmael Johnson (alias Bob Johnson) is referred to as the father of 'The Concert Party'. From Nigeria, Martin Banham recorded that:

> Apart from one touring company of Nigerian entertainers (Hubert Ogunde and his company), specializing in extravagant melodramas spiced with dancing and music and heavily laced with morals, there is no Nigerian theatre company.(3)

Hubert Ogunde and his group have always depended upon themselves rather than western mentors throughout their existence. Although The Ghanaian Concert Party has been referred to as a 'syncretic fusion of western and indigenous elements', the indigenous elements are not as pronounced as they are in the Nigerian Opera of people like Hubert Ogunde. It is important to note that no seriousness was really attached to this work. For a long time any theatre activity worth its name amongst Africans had to have a white godfather for it to be recognized as good. Mshengu reports that for a long time theatre activity amongst Africans in South Africa had to receive European blessings before it really could be regarded as anything close to theatre. He records that:

> We are told that Esau Mthethwa's Lucky Stars, who performed their musical plays in Zulu all over the country, influenced drama in the townships in the mid-1930s but it was Gibson Kente, though, who in the mid-1960s broke away successfully from dependence on white capital and expertise.(4)

Kente's work is likened to that of Hubert Ogunde.(5) It is not based on one location. It is a travelling theatre. It goes to the people. It should be interesting to see whether this break from European dominance points to the possibility of an African theatre aesthetics. This can best be done by understanding what the concepts of 'Concert Party' and 'Opera' mean in Africa.

Concert Parties were very common from the 1920 to the early 60s all over Africa (particularly in West, Central and Southern Africa). These were musical shows comprising group dancing/singing short routines interspersed with short sketches. One would go to a concert show to watch a group sing and dance as well as do some acting. Collins says that:

> Ghana's first concert actor was Teacher Yalley. In his presentations he used to joke, sing, and dance, wearing a fancy dress, wig, false moustache and the white make up of a minstrel. His shows were in English, and tickets were expensive; consequently the audience consisted mostly of the educated Black elite.(6)

Talking about the Concert Party work of Bob Johnson, Efua Sutherland traces its origins to a combination of factors, namely; Empire day celebrations, one-man shows, traditional performances and the cinema. Referring to John's attachment to Empire day concerts she says:

> Bob Johnson loved the excitement of the parades, and the concerts on that day for which schools spent long hours preparing their school pupils.(7)

Such concerts comprised songs and dances learnt in class from European sources. But so did the one-man shows aimed at entertaining the "very big people" lawyers and other professional men of social standing'. The silent films of Charlie Chaplin were another influence on Bob Johnson. Having brought these influences together Johnson aimed for the lower class of his society as his audiences. Rather than depend on foreign material for his sketches he, together with his friends,

> planned to do acts of comedy and plays based on observation of domestic life .... Keeping the melodies of new words to make them serve the dramatic purposes of the new playlets and comic acts they created with ideas from the local social scene.(8)

The style of performance was built out of traditional story-telling techniques and contata shows performed by church groups. Performances employed 'speech and song'. The company always included a 'jazz band'. Wherever possible resident musicians were encouraged to join with the band wherever the group visited. Today the 'Concert Party' is described as:

> a professional organization composed of a central core of founding members and an ever-changing periphery of band-boys. The concert play is a slapstick musical comedy containing a prominent moral tone, performed in Akan language. Music punctuates the speech of the actors, and song lyrics are relevant to the plot of the play.
> The concert actors portray in a humorous and exaggerated fashion situation and stereotypes familiar to their audience; the audience responds with a great sense of participation.(9)

Like the Concert Party, the Yoruba Opera grew out of a meeting os school plays, church contatas and traditional modes of performance. The work of Ogunde borrows a good deal from church contatas, Alarinjo theatre and modern theatre techniques. His plays are built around traditional themes like witchcraft, culture conflict etc. The aims of the Nigerian operatic groups are essentially commercial. They seek to entertain and make money more than anything else. The structure of such companies ensures that these goals are met. For instance Ogunde's company is essentially a family concern run by members of his family. Whilst they all travel from place to place entertaining their goal is really to maximise profit rather than promote African theatre.

4.4 UNIVERSITY TRAVELLING THEATRE COMPANIES

When we talk about taking theatre to the people in Africa we very often think of Travelling Theatre Companies started by educational institutions like Ibadan University, Makerere University, Universities of Zambia and Malawi. Several accounts have been written about these University based travelling groups. Here we shall look at their goals, their structures, and achievements vis-a-vis their audiences.

From the outset these travelling companies took to the road in a bid to sell the idea of theatre amongst the people in general. They set out to teach people about the phenomenon of theatre as they understood it in the classroom, but gradually they understood that the process was really two way. Whilst they were to teach the ordinary man their concept of theatre, they too were to learn a few lessons about theatre in society. They were to find out that the African audience was not to be taken for granted.

Shifting from university campuses to school halls, community centres, market squares, churches, hospitals and even football pitches they initially took out European plays and presented them to bemused audiences who very often, if not always, did not really respond to such onslaughts on their sensibilities.(10) Perhaps from the experience of such work Makerere Travelling Theatre took out a different kind of repertoire on its first trip.(11) Following the footsteps of Makerere, Chikwakwa Theatre and the Chancellor College Travelling Theatres in Zambia and Malawi respectively embarked on working with either African adaptations of established plays or locally written plays. Still in all this work the audiences were considered devoid of theatre experience. The theatre artists in these shows were coming down from some ivory tower to show the poor illiterate rural masses something they were missing in their lives. There was no attempt at this stage to see whether these people had any notion of theatre amongst themselves. In this work there was no attempt to shift the roots of theatre from a European background to an African one. Theatre here had very little, if any, to do with the lives of the Africans and their culture. There was no attempt to understand the African audience and their sense of theatre. Theatre practitioners did not attempt to live and mingle with the people. The creations brought to the people were alien ones and they bore no relevancy to the experiences of the people. If anything they only served to perpetuate the Aristotelian exploitative poetics criticized by Boal.(12) Let us turn to specific examples of this work from Ibadan and Makerere Universities in West and East Africa respectively.

As early as 1960 Martin Banham concluded that Nigerians:

> do not have to be educated to an understanding of the purpose of the dramas as they have to be to appreciate the novel, for instance, for within narrow cultural limits players have been a familiar sight throughout their lives.(13)

At the same time he advised, in the same country that, in theatre work:

> The ultimate object must be the creation of professional theatre companies, and the sooner they appear the better The immediate practical answer may well be to attempt to persuade the government to finance one central company and to equip it with the means of travelling.(14)

For him taking a theatre company out to various parts of the community would make up for the dearth of professional expertise in the country. This was 'professional' in a European sense. The *Alarinjo* players did not feature in this categorization. Later on Banham acknowledges the presence of such professional actors in African traditional society.(15) Neither did their established travelling theatre style receive any attention. For Geoffrey Axworthy:

> Travelling theatre is one of the oldest forms of presentation, inevitable in societies insufficiently developed to support settled theatre.(16)

The development of a travelling theatre at the University of Ibadan is seen in this light more than in that of trying to promote theatre amongst the people.

> U.C.I.D.S. University College of Ibadan Dramatic Society first adopted the travelling theatre idea in 1959/60, when the Arts Theatre at the University was closed for backstage extensions.(17)

The repertoire of this theatre was made up of mostly one-act plays - original ones and adaptations.(18) A good deal of experimentation with language for the Nigerian Theatre accompanied its production work. The possibility of presenting plays in Pidgin rather than formal English was looked into. Production and play creation were done en masse for the first time during this period. Although there was no conscious attempt to create a theatre relevant to the majority of Nigerian people, U.C.I.D.S. was on its way to doing so. The work of other contemporary travelling theatres on the continent must have learnt a lesson or two from this.

Following the examples of Ibadan University, Makerere University established its own travelling theatre in the early 1960s. Here the idea behind its formation was to tour plays to various parts of East Africa. As we have already pointed out earlier on, Ngugi wa Thiong'o is said to have made a suggestion towards this goal whilst still a student at Makerere.(19) In making this suggestion it was not simply the idea of touring plays, but the creation of relevant theatre for the masses that he had in mind. Interpretation of the word 'relevant' is crucial here. From the repertoire that the Makerere University Travelling Theatre took on its first tour of East Africa it is clear the word referred to plays about East Africans.(20) The format of presentation was still the one learnt in school from western sources. Lee and Cook say that

> The Makerere Travelling Theatre .... presented plays in English, Swahili, Luganda, Two and Runyoro/Rutoro .... varying the language medium within any one programme .... Most of the plays in African languages .... happened to be short commedies, and always brought the house down; but when village audiences without formal education were asked which plays they liked best, the answer was almost invariably .... the plays in English - because these plays were more serious and gave more food for thought.(21)

When talking about these travelling theatre companies people mostly stress the idea of presenting theatre in remote and rural areas, very rarely do they address themselves to the question of participants' reactions to the whole exercise. Descriptions of a particular tour would suggest taking theatre away from the comforts of campus life has never been easy. Think of a:

> theatre .... going round with actors - a 24 foot trailer which stands about twelve feet high, but whose sides fold down to give a floor space 24 feet by 32 feet. On this is erected a frame holding the doorways, alcove and upper balcony of the Elizabethan stage, giving an acting space of about 24 feet by 14 feet.....(22)

and consider how much time it must have taken the company to set it up. Mupa Shumba, one of the founder members of the Makerere University Travelling Theatre recalls how tiring the tours were.(23) These were travelling theatre exercises promoted by university people for rural and 'unsophisticated' masses of the country. Although token attempts to wrestle with appropriate language and themes were made, no attempt to incorporate, or learn from, the people was made. It is only in recent years that such an attempt has been made.

Popular theatre uses a large variety of traditional media - music, dancing, story telling and even acrobatics

Chapter Five

5. TOWARDS AFRICAN THEATRE

5.1. CREATING THEATRE FOR THE PEOPLE

The idea of touring ready made plays, concieved by University dons according to their own notions of theatre, gave way to attempts at creating relevant plays for the masses. It was quickly felt that the idea of parading Shakespeare or Shaw amongst the masses in Africa was not going to help develop theatre on the continent. If anything it was only going to serve to alienate them away from theatre.

Besides this realization there was the African student participating in this theatre work who gave sufficient indication either directly or otherwise that more relevant material was wanted. Ngugi wa Thiong'o is quoted by Bernth Lindfors as having suggested the formation of the Makerere Travelling Theatre in his call for relevant theatre to be taken to Africans in their various locations. John Linstrum quickly learnt at the University of Malawi that the African student

> in drama improvisation is unconcerned with what the western world considers vital issues (...) His concerns are the things which are fundamental to his existence.(1)

In Zambia the work of the Chikwakwa Theatre has always shown political awareness - particularly an anti-colonial attitude. This is not only addressed to the past, but also to wherever evidence of neo-colonialism surfaces. Plays have been adapted and done with this in mind. Commenting on a production of Houseboy - an adaptation of Oyono Mbiya's novel of the same title - the director, Michael Etherton had this to say about it:

> The exciting thing about the production (....) was that for the first time things were being said on stage that a number of Zambians had felt were not possible to say on a public platform. Things were being said about the white colonial period about their white masters in a way which absolutely indicated them (   ) people felt at last things were being made articulate - that their own thoughts, their own ideas were being made by articulate.(2)

The search for presenting relevant theatre to the people does not necessarily take us to old myths and the past for sources. Rather, it takes the theatre practitioner to contemporary experience - political, social and economic.

Whilst it is true that most theatre practitioners trying to establish a truly African theatre have tended to adopt indigenous myths, legends and rituals, this has nothing to do with creating theatre for the people. For most of the time such creative efforts have been done within the western understanding of theatre. They sometimes evoke some exotic semblance of African life, but within very limited scope. Attempts to break way from this tradition have involved identifying rural communities unambigously, as the expected audience. For instance in Zambia, instead of confining performance to townships, Chikwakwa Theatre extended them to villages in the rural areas of the country.(3) Such work has mostly been experimental. The people involved in it have operated from their 'ivory towers' in university campuses, rather than from within the rural communities themselves.

At best such experiments have tried to integrate 'music and dance with dialogue of the play and also (.....) with the use of local language in certain parts of the play'.(4) So attempts to create total theatre as opposed to the dramatic script have been central to creating theatre for the people.

Naturally, such an obvious interest in contemporary experiences (particularly negative ones) and the rural community has not been a welcome development within the political arena. Therefore theatre's very existence has always hang on a very thin thread ready to be cut almost at will by authorities. According to Imbuga, theatre practitioners have become the black sheep of the family in the third world precisely because of this reason.(5) Censorship procedures have had to be introduced in one way or another. Very often the custodian of such powers has been the central government rather than say, the ministry of culture.

But perhaps more important still has been the failure of these efforts to 'create theatre for the people' resulting from rejection by the people themselves. Creating theatre for the people is not sufficient by itself. In fact it is not very different from simply touring foreign plays amongst the people. Whilst the plays may veer towards African experiences there has to be sufficient effort to identify an appropriate way of presenting it. Theatre practitioners on the continent have been quick to recognize this fact. As Michael Etherton put it in Zambia:

> We want a theatre which stands as a sort of contradiction to the typical white bourgeois theatre (that) which is so limited in its scope and (....) which observes the typical social behaviour patterns of the bourgeois (.....). We want instead to actually involve people in issues,to get them talking about what the play is about rather than about individual acting merit or how lovely the costumes are, or anything like that.(6)

Structures like the Chikwakwa Theatre in Zambia are attempts to bring this about.

'Creating theatre for the people' still assumes that the 'people' are devoid of any ideas about theatre. But as experience shows, in Zambia the Chikwakwa Theatre learnt a lesson or two fairly early in their efforts at this. On their first rural tour, it was brought home to them very lucidly that villagers had a thing or two to teach university dons and students:

> The plays should not be too simplistic. As much time as possible should be spent in villages while allowing time for performances in townships. A smaller group could stay longer and write its own material while in the village (....) more time should be allotted to the creation and arrangement of music and dancing, and more women should be included.(7)

One cannot create theatre for the people as if they were a blank sheet of paper on which to write whatever one wishes to say. Rather one should really think of 'creating theatre with the people'. This is the latest stage in trying to identify an African theatre aesthetics. Major shifts have had to be made on the part of theatre practitioners in order to achieve this. The nature of theatre stemming from colonial times is giving way to something more fundamental to the development of a people's culture. Theatre has ceased to be simply a toy thing dangled before a people still waiting to become self-sufficient and self-reliant both politically and economically. Theatre practitioners in Africa have become of age. They have come to realize they must be with the people in creating theatre if it is to mature. They are now 'creating theatre with the people'.

5.2. CREATING THEATRE WITH THE PEOPLE

The reason for introducing theatre amongst Africans in the colonial days was to improve them - to civilize them. The basis for such work was to be found in the mother land of the colonial master. The African was devoid of any culture worth its name. But experience has shown how untrue this belief was. However, the need to articulate African culture has been a problem. A problem which has arisen out of failure to evolve an original way of looking at it. The theatre that we have been looking at for instance, still suffers recognition because it is evaluated through alien eyes rather than through a realistic measure.

Theatre experiences of recent times suggest that a way has been found for identifying a truly African theatre. We believe this is a way which has no ethnic biases. This has come about with the swing in African theatre practice from one which has always treated the audience as separate from practitioners, to one which is insisting on the two sides working together. It is in the spirit of this change that African theatre practitioners are now 'creating theatre with the people'. The work of Laedza Batanani in Botswana, Kamiiruthi in Kenya and that of University travelling theatres in Tanzania, Malawi, Amadu Bello (Nigeria) and Zambia exemplify it.

Creating theatre with the people involves theatre practitioners moving away from their stand-offish stance to direct involvement with the people. Hitherto practitioners saw no need for living within the community and getting the community directly involved in the process of acting, directing and even stage management in their theatre work. Now they do.

The work of travelling theatre companies cited in this books suffered from myopia for a long time until Universities started relating their work to the needs of the common man. Adult education departments have been the forerunners (in practical terms) in this respect. So we find that it is from people in theatre work really emanate. Names like Paulo Freire, Augusto Boal, Ross Kidd, to name but a few are at the centre of all this work. Terms like participatory research, 'concientization' and development are common and the basis of such work. The major change in theatre practice has been lending an ear to the needs of the people themselves. This has been done through allowing them to articulate their needs in their own language and in their own way. Nobody suggests the content of what they saw nor the way they say it. Theatre practitioners only spark off as it were the processes of articulation and creation.

By living and creating with the community, a new and genuine theatre language is being evolved. Whilst the same age - old songs, dances, drums and proverbs or riddles form the basis of this work, they are so from a different background. They are not a language imposed upon the people as when someone thinks this is the way African theatre should be. Rather they result from the people's own wish to utilize what they possess in the process of articulating their thoughts and feelings. They are the truthful language they have at their disposal.

In this new wave of work theatre practitioners are welding their thoughts, ideas and emotions with those of the people. This has come about through an ardous process of learning the language of the people for some practitioners whilst for some it has been through conscious experiments geared at producing a desired goal. The work of Chikwakwa Theatre set out to achieve the following goals:

- To be a people's theatre that embraces the intelligentsia;

- To perform relevant social plays;
- To integrate the concept of theatre with ancient and traditional elements of the Zambian performing arts;
- To take theatre to the people.(8)

Out of such a philosophy ideas relevant to a people's theatre come up. As the company performed plays for the rural masses, they learnt very quickly that the pedantic stance of their philosophy was not the right one. They changed to trusting the people as repositories of their own culture and started engaging them in the whole process of articulating this culture. In Kenya the Kamiriithu experiences of Ngugi show explicitly how the people can take over the process of creating theatre. Ngugi wa Thiong'o speaks of I Will Marry When I Want as a production done by the people *en masse*:

> Although the overall direction of the play was under Kimani Gecau, the whole project became a collective community effort with peasants and workers seizing more and more initiative in revising and adding to the script, in directing dance and movements, and in the general organization.(9)

Such a thing can only happen where the people's way of life becomes the fulcrum from which everything is supported. The work of Ngugi wa Thiong'o at Kamiriithu had to understand the working rhythms of the village. It had to demystify the whole process of play-acting and production.

For African theatre to truly grow it must recognize its audience. This is not in the school room where only a minority of the people are. It is in the rural areas where the ordinary men and women of the village live. For a long time African theatre practitioners have taken the classroom and the town hall or theatre building as their basis for work. This explains why there are so many scripts (whether in print or manuscript form) written in English or French as opposed to ones in indigenous languages. It also explains the belief that good theatre can only be had in properly built exotic theatre premises rather than say the village square. There is a need for moving away from this colonial legacy to the reality of the day. Theatre people must make it their duty to shift their roots towards the majority of the people on the continent - in rural areas.

Having shifted their roots, they must abandon their aloofness and join the rank and file of the community. This is where ideas and experiences of adult educators like Freire, Boal, Kidd and Etherton come in. While these people seem not to be very interested in theatre per se what they aim for ties in very well with the goals of developing theatre or a culture (if we put it in more general terms).

There are two things that are happening in African theatre viz; (a) the practitioner is re-educating himself into understanding theatre language and material relevant for the community; (b) the theatre practitioner is opening up dialogue with the community in order for them to join hands in creating a true African theatre. The first point follows the pattern of work done by Amadu Bello University's Drama department.(10) Here, following the ideas of Brechtien theatre, practitioners go out amongst the people and listen to rural extension workers as well as the people themselves talk about various problems within the community. From such talks they (the practitioners) devise plays which are performed before the villagers. These performances are followed by discussions of subjects treated with the villagers. Such work introduces the practitioners to problems of creating relevant theatre for the people. It also acquaints them with the basic techniques necessary for creating a community-based drama. This theatre work is of benefit to the practitioner, not the community at large.

The other point is realized by involving the community right from the point of collecting information, through creation of the plays based on such information to performance. In so doing the community is constantly engaged in a process of critically assessing what they see as their life. Ultimately they re-examine their various roles in the light of real life. The whole process is a self-analysis process. In such work the community is being both 'conscientized' and creating meaningful theatre. The work of the Kamariithu Community Education and Cultural Centre, Limuru, Kenya in 1977-1981 comes closest to this.(11) This is called Theatre for Development. This work would seem to have its own history as we are going to show in the following Chapter. Some people see it as growing separate from the western-oriented theatre practice of the earlier part. But strictly speaking, this work should be seen as a direct result of the dialectical development theatre practice which is going through on the continent. In other words what one sees in Africa's theatre practice, is really a continuum of activities not trancated independent episodes.

Storry telling and music keep oral tradition alive.
Storry tellers and musicians in Sierra Leone

PART TWO

Chapter Six

6. THEATRE AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

Apart from the well known indigenous, literary and popular forms of theatre in Africa there is yet another type of theatre developing on the continent. This is Theatre for development. In some way this particular theatre continues the functional nature of indigenous theatre into our modern age. It is the aim of this section to examine this theatre critically and see whether it can really be properly developed since it is becoming more popular than the other types. This Chapter is broken into the following areas - the history and development of Theatre for Development in Africa over the years, rationale for this theatre as presented by various people involved in its development, the nature of this theatre and how it relates to communications in development.

6.1 THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA: BACKGROUND

Various terms are (and can be) used for Theatre for Development, for example: popular theatre, propaganda theatre, case drama, developmental theatre or sometimes political theatre. Each of these terms indicates to some extent what Theatre for Development is about, but not fully. A look at what this theatre tries to achieve provides some clearer idea of what its practitioners are creating on the continent, whatever terminology is used.

Theatre for Development is being developed as one of the ways of helping the masses in Africa to come to terms with their environment and the onus of improving their lot culturally, educationally, politically, economically and socially. In due course we shall be looking at how all this is gone about in various parts of Africa. But before we do that let us look at the origins and development of this theatre on the continent.

6.2. ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

It is not a cliché to say indigenous performances in Africa contain within them some functional element. In most cases this takes the form of a didactic statement. Whilst performers might engage in doing spectacular movements and dances, they might also carry within the performances special messages or lessons to some members of their audience. Some work in Theatre for Development is a direct result of recognizing this characteristic in indigenous African performances.

In the last part of this book we have shown how western conventional theatre activities were initiated by the colonial education system in a bid to develop the cultural life of the natives in Africa. Whilst 'straight drama' was being taught and encouraged amongst the natives particularly through schools and colleges, its development was very much pegged to missionary intentions of eradicating pagan behaviour and any uncivil habits evident in their lives. So we find that even the plays which were being developed from folk tales placed heavy emphasis on the moral qualities of the stories.

Drama was not being pursued simply for its own sake, but also as a tool for inculcating certain behavioural patterns amongst Africans. In other words drama was being used as tool for teaching something other than drama itself. The didactic possibilities inherent in the dramatic art form were thus being exploited to the full. It is also from this background that work in Theatre for Development derives its origins.

We can therefore say that the development of this theatre is due to three factors. These are: colonial attempts to improve Africans through drama, a recognition on the part of colonialists that some positive aspects of behaviour could be extruded from indigenous performances and Africans' own reaction to these attempts at developing their culture. We should mention however that although there is evidence of this theatre's existence in the early days of colonial education there has been a period of absence, during which the more literary and western oriented theatre took sway. Its re-surfacing may be attributed to the dialectical results of the colonial education system.

In 1930 G.A. Stevens reported what state African 'theatre' was in as people were trying to boost 'the aesthetic education of the negro'.(1) One method employed in order to create this theatre was 'to take a native legend or story with a moral, split up the action into as many as eight or nine different scenes, each dealing with one dramatic moment, and interspersed with considerable knock-about dancing and singing'.(2) It is interesting to note how close this technique is to theatre for development work going on in Zambia today in spite of the wide gap between the two events.

The following year, in 1931, Mary Kelly wrote about some experimental work being carried out by missionaries at the Holy Cross Mission, Pondoland (South Africa).(3) Here these people 'were concerned with the fact that the Christianizing of the natives seemed to mean the removal of much of their lowest instincts rather than of any ideal, and they felt that something should be suggested to take their place'.(4) In other words the process of 'Christianizing' was one of deculturizing the African which needed checking without losing the 'civilizing' mission. One way of doing this was to adopt and dramatize local folklore, giving it an obvious Christian story bias.(5)

Earlier at a conference on African Drama held by the 'Village Drama section of the British Drama League in September, 1932' this sort of work was endorsed as one positive way towards developing African drama.(6) At this conference 'it was decided: (a) That a collection of themes should be made for the use of native teachers (b) That a report of this Conference should be sent to all educationalists in Africa, with a letter asking for their experience in the work, and for any conclusions that they had formed on it'.(7) The result of such a resolution was to push theatre work in Africa more directly under the wing of educationalists rather than mere missionaries. It also extended the areas of interest in terms of themes beyond the Bible story.

It should therefore be no wonder to see a report from Kenya in 1933 having nothing to do with 'religious drama', but community development. W.H. Taylor reporting his 'observations on the dramatic talent of Africans' spoke of the work which was being carried out at the Jeans School of Kabete (in Kenya) whose task was the harnessing of 'the natural dramatic talent of Africans and utilizing it for educational purposes and, finally, developing it in so far as it was amenable to conscious development for purely artistic ends'.(8) Here was the first evidence of direct use of a theatre art for purposes other than aesthetic education. For although the religious drama mentioned earlier on seemed to do the same, its exponents talked more in aesthetic language than anything else. The moral tone of their work was always taken for granted. The work at Kabete had nothing to do with morality - in the Christian sense. Taylor continued to say that:

> In our first task we were actuated by utilitarian motives, our aim being to use the stage for propaganda purposes. The Jeans teacher, it must be remembered, is more than a supervisor of village schools; he is a man with a new faith and a new ideal centred round 'Better Homes', 'Cleaner Homes', Healthier Children', and 'Better Gardens and Plantations'. Various ways of instilling these tenets into the pagan population have been tried by Jeans teachers, but no one way has proved so successful in its practical outcome as the lecture combined with the propaganda play.(9)

In this work the technique was 'crudely' propagandist. There was no attempt to be subtle about the message. Continuing to describe his work Taylor said:

> The moral or points to be emphasized were always placed in a favourable position by the use of characters personifying animals from native lore. In the object of the play was to teach the value of grainstores, it was the clever Hare who profited by its use and the Hyena who regretted clinging to the old methods; if we were trying to show the value of good management of a village school, the poor type of teacher was generally represented by the Monkey or Hyena and the better type by the Hare or the Bee. The acting was burlesque in the extreme and often overdone, but the point or points to be stressed were much discussed afterwards and taken to heart.(10)

This work was highly recommended by specialists outside the teaching profession too. Taylor reported that even medical officers and sanitary inspectors in the area commented favourably on the work that his school was doing.(11) One point that can easily be ignored in all this work is the emphasis which was being placed upon coaching the native teacher how to handle the drama work amongst his compatriots. At another conference on native drama held by the British Drama League again in 1933 it was popularly felt amongst those who attended (teachers, missionaries and administrators) that having introduced drama amongst the natives the next step was:

> to ask African teachers to make a selection of the native themes, so that a large amount of African folk-tales should be ready for dramatic use: from which , and simultaneously with which , ... the African teachers should be encouraged to make plays with their pupils and the adults of the villages, and that the highly educated African should, wherever possible, see these plays and note the methods and growth.(12)

In another context and much later in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) H.H. Ferreira talked about 'The Use of Social Case Drama in Training African Social Workers' by the colonial Government.(13) Here he spelt out how in Northern Rhodesia they were using the so called 'social case drama' to combat 'the problem (...) of conveying technical knowledge and subtleties of "case work" technique to a student body whose education and grasp of English, the language of instruction, was limited; the problem of students failing to grasp abstract ideas'.(14) This work like that of Taylor was supplementing lectures and field work. He said that the basis of the work was role play. The technique here was simply to leave the role playing in the hands of the student who played case worker - after he had devised the whole situation together with the various characters he was to be involved with. The playing of the roles was gone into without any rehearsal. The students were just left to play their parts as best as they could. Following this would be a session of criticism from the students on how well the whole case had been handled by the case worker. For Ferreira, all this allowed two things: maximum consideration of 'cultural' issues in social work as well as maximum participation from students in the process of learning.

So far we can see how earlier part of this century shows a clear emphasis upon propaganda theatre rather than theatre for art's sake that has dominated the later half of the century.

All educational endeavours during the earlier part of the century were motivated by utilitarian aims. The emphasis in missionary schools was on moral teaching. As time went on and as the idea of developing drama caught on moves towards using drama for educational purposes became more pronounced. The concept of the Jeans school played a leading role in this development. The areas tackled through this drama ranged from hygiene to modern methods of agriculture. And these are areas which still occupy the minds of present day practitioners. There are several questions which one would like to ask concerning the kind of aesthetics this approach to drama must lead to. But perhaps we should look at the sudden re-emergence of this 'educational' drama on the continent first.

6.3. RATIONALE

Politics and intellectual nationalism today are responsible for the view that performing arts have always been fulfilling a utilitarian role in the community and that to encourage this serves to forestall our nearly lost African heritage. Politicians claim that:

> There are many reasons why our forefathers chose to use songs, dance drums and masks to educate their young, to comment on the socio-political conditions in their societies and to preserve their historical legends. One of the reasons is that our forefathers realized that one of the most effective methods of education is through audio-visual aids of what was familiar. In other words our forefathers subscribed to the modern education axiom that if he sees and hears he remembers. They also realized that by presenting ideas through a variety of media

> such as songs, dance, mime, poetic recitals, ordinary narrative and masquerades one is able to capture the imagination of the people. It was the function of our traditional theatre, not merely to entertain, but also to instruct.(15)

In this vein theatre for development on the continent must be encouraged as 'a positive effort in endeavours to build on Africa's cultural heritage'.(16)

Talking about the sudden resurgence of this theatre in the third world today, Ross Kidd explains the interest in it as 'an outgrowth of uses of rural theatre in the fundamental education campaigns of the 40's and 50's (.... in India, Ghana, Jamaica, Mexico and Indonesia) and the search for ways of supplementing the mass media which have been shown to be incapable of affecting change on their own without some intermediary process'.(17) This view is partly supported by David Kerr who says that popular theatre is being encoureged as a tool for adult education 'because of deficiences in existing educational institutions and communications media which stem from elitism of colonial education and its irrelevancy to the goals of national development'.(18) Both Ross Kidd and David Kerr relate theatre for development to non-formal education. They also share one philosophical basis in their discussion of this education. And this is a philosophy deriving from the ideas of Paulo Freire. Of his work in Botswana (called Laedza Batanani) Kidd says it was 'a non-formal education project (...) which attempted to follow a Freirean model.'(19) He goes on to say that 'one of the key features of this programme was the use of popular theatre on the medium for encouraging participation, raising issues, fostering discussion and promoting collective action'.(20) From Nigeria, in West Africa, Michael Etherton talking about his work with students of drama at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, amongst local farmers in a project called Wason Manoma said their intentions in this were to communicate 'to rural communities specific development objectives'.(21) The basis of this work was 'the realization that the real media for disseminating scientific information helpful to rural African communities are the so-called folk media: masquerades, drumming and dancing, story-telling and the songs of the wandering praise-singers ... which make the community development message so immediate and pertinent emphasizing the basic goals of participation and self-reliance'.(22) Once again the goal is non-formal education.

On a slightly different premise Etherton and Ngugi wa Thiong'o are developing a theatre which is more directly political in its texture although within the mode of this 'Theatre for Development'. Talking about 'Street Theatre in Northern Nigeria' Abah and Etherton lament the dearth of 'radical street theatre in contemporary African towns'.(23) And in trying to meet this need at Ahmadu Bello University once again students (from the Drama section of the English Department to which they belong) are trying to produce plays relevant to the needs of a neighbouring squalid suburb.(24) The idea here seems first of all to awaken the minds of the residents of this place to the need for knowing their rights and demanding fair attention from the government. Etherton says that for this theatre:

> to succeed, the plays must take the part of the local people. They should reflect life

> from the view point of the villagers themselves; and they should not avoid articulating criticism of government policy which is inadequate. Thus, although they may initially set out to be less than political in their aims, these plays may end up as the most politically active of all African theatre.(25)

Believing that 'crisis is the condition of social action in the Third World today', Etherton justifies this theatre by saying it is 'a legitimate political objective to discover strategies and organisation skills for functioning politically and creatively within the context of the crisis'.(26)

Ngugi wa Thiong'o who has consistently 'talked' of the need for bridging the gap between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in a bid to put into practice what he preaches finally got involved with his people in Limuru (Kenya). His work, one hopes, marks a shift into a 'commitment to praxis' from the inertia laden 'parrotting of the rhetoric of protest' that Africa still has to outgrow.(27) Working in a voluntary 'adult literacy' project with Ngugi wa Mirri, Ngugi wa Thiong'o saw the need for educating his people beyond the alphabet, to include 'culture'. This way, his people could be made ready for a true 'homecoming' which they still have to achieve when neo-colonialism is out of the way. He argues that colonialism still exists in Kenya in spite of independence. Its life depends on cultural control. And language being central to culture, any vernacular in Kenya falls victim to colonial or neo-colonial exploitation. It get suppressed in a variety of ways by the exploiter. Independence in Africa has failed to recognize this fact and consequently it has not achieved its true meaning. Until 'flag' independence is accompanied by cultural independence there will be no 'homecoming' for Africans. African writers can play a part in bringing this about. They can do so by addressing themselves to the majority in a language and style the majority of their people can understand.

This is how his theatre work in 'Gikuyu' came into being. Whilst he shares the ultimate goal of his work with other practitioners of Theatre for Development, he differs from them in his emphasis on artistry. He insists that whatever he does with his people should be well done, polished and professional. Other practitioners tend to de-emphasize this aspect. The message is all they really care about. However the goal of both Etherton and Ngugi wa Thiong'o here still remain non-formal education.

We are also aware of the fact that generally the artist in our present age is faced with a great threat to his continued existence. UNESCO is well aware of the need to protect the artist in his society. 'Commercialism' is the source of this worry in the west.(28) In the Third World it is more a question of economic priorities and post colonial debates on self-assertion. It is not strange these days to think in terms of economic viability or, to use a term more in vogue amongst international aid donors, 'developmental' and 'non-developmental' areas when talking about development in the Third World. Most prominent amongst the so-called non-developmental areas are the disciplines having something to do with culture. Although the I.L.O. reached some agreement in 1978 that:

> ... artistic creation is of crucial importance for cultural and social development and that creators are full partners in the life of the community and that their cooperation is required in setting up operational structures for its development.(29)

there is no assurance that there in fact is any need for really worrying about perpetuating the artist's role. In the west perhaps the role of the artist as an aesthetist is the prime factor in his survival. But in the third world it is a matter of whether there is enough justification for his continued existence. The little capital that is available to governments should be directed towards more tangible results other than mere aesthetic thirst and quests.

This state of affairs explains in part why modern African theatre is becoming more and more functional. Quite apart from developments in this area stemming from colonial educationalist experiments, today cultural policies which have a bearing on this in the third world have been seen in terms of economic development. Torn between aid money coming from outside and ideologies stemming from post-colonial politics, the African theatre artist is cornered into justifying his existence before his world.

Perhaps we should explain the economics of this art in this world before we get on to the politics which seem to also have a strangle-hold on artistic endeavours. Traditionally the African artist - here we are thinking more particularly of the performing artist - lives not just by his talent but more also by involving himself in the ordinary work of gardening, fishing etc. If his talent brings in money to him, it does so by the way and not of necessity. This therefore means that 'commercialism' as it is known in artistic circles of the west is strange to Africa. Today in the twentieth century, the west is of course only next door. One just has to look at the amount of foreign expertise and aid being poured into the Third World nation to confirm this. The ties which come with this aid have a bearing on the artistic life of the Third World nations. Priority areas are decided by donor countries. Experts are sent along with given aid not just to show how sophisticated machinery works, but also to direct decision making. Failure to follow suggestions and ideas so provided usually leads to discontinuation of aid (if not earning ridicule in the press from the donors).

One result of this situation has been the demarcation of areas concerned into 'developmental' and 'non-developmental' ones. The economic infra-structures that are coming up in the third world show a clear bias for the said 'developmental' areas. These in almost all cases include anything to do with 'material' wealth build-up. Areas like engineering and agriculture are very positively grouped under this 'developmental' category. Artistic, religious and such like areas come under the 'non-developmental' category which gets nothing or very little patronage from the state financially even if culturally the people have had a long tradition of respecting or according the arts or religion a special place within the community. Aid donors stress this observation too.

The politics said to form the other yoke upon the artist is not necessarily from outside the third world. Common now are claims which declare the need for identifying with the masses, the need to be committed to the ideals of the 'people'.(30) In most third world nations where the proletariat forms the majority this declaration has in fact reached the ideals or at least expectations of Marx and Engels. Isms and art are becoming bedfellows. In the spirit of this 'Ism' or that 'Ism' the artist must commit his work to a particular creed of politics. There is no sitting on the fence.

This commitment idea once again begs justification of all artists operating in the third world. Aesthetics are not of primary importance to the people. Survival is the thing. Be it political or physical, it is survival and artists must commit themselves to that end. This is an urgent matter too. In other words, the artist must also understand that their art should be an 'instant' package presented in an 'easy to carry' wrapper. This suggests the artist join the 'popular culturists'.

The result of these two parallel demands on the artist have also given Africa her 'Theatre for Development' or as some say 'popular theatre'. This is a theatre which combines use of the theatre as a medium for propagating ideas and entertainment.(31)

6.4. THE NATURE OF 'THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT'

In almost all cases where this theatre is in existence, it is led by a team of experts who work with various types of extension workers or 'village level workers', assisting them 'to get their health, nutrition, and agricultural messages across to rural villagers using entertainment and fun'.(32) We might add to this list, adult literacy campaigns too. Throughout the continent we find projects of one type or another engaged in Theatre for Development. We could name a few examples like: the Laedza Batanani Popular Theatre in Botswana, Chikwakwa Travelling Theatre in Zambia, the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources' Extension Services Department and the Chancellor College Travelling Theatre in Malawi, the Kamiruthi adult literacy project with which Ngugi wa Thiong'o is connected in Kenya, the Ahmadu Bello University Drama work with farmers and suburban populations and the Government of Sierra Leone/Care project LEARN.

Areas which come under this theatre vary from straight drama to songs which are employed in any way as media for communicating ideas related to rural development. The Government of Sierra Leone /Care project mentioned above uses 'dramatizations, music, visual aids to bring new information and ideas to the villagers to help them keep healthy and improve their agricultural practices'.(33) Laedza Batanani Popular Theatre, like Chikwakwa

Travelling Theatre of Zambia and the Extension Services Department in Malawi include puppetry and dance in their work. So we can say that broadly speaking Theatre for Development involves a wide range of resources. Here we are going to isolate a few elements of this theatre in order to illustrate how it is created.

6.4.1 Songs

Usually these are campaign songs composed and sung by teams of extension workers either alone or together with the people amongst whom they work. In some cases the songs are recorded on tapes and distributed all over the country for playing through the radio or portable tape recorders during working sessions. Where the latter is the case the help of properly trained musicians is sought. This is the case in Sierra Leone's project LEARN whose theme song is sang by Big Fayia and the Military Jazz Band.(34)

The songs are sung in vernacular languages and usually their tunes are well known adaptations of popular music styles. The guiding principles in composing such songs are:

(a) simple catchy tune,
(b) simple words and lots of repetition,
(c) clear message.(35)

6.4.2 Dance

Dances employed in this theatre are those which already possess within themselves abundant mimetic potential, for what actually takes place here is what should properly be termed dance-drama. An example of such dances is Malipenga or Mganda found in Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia.(36) Although it is danced to the accompaniment of songs, the dominant part of the music comes from drums, whistles and gourds which are specially designed to play like some form of trumpet. To the best of such instruments, dancers mime several scenes in which they can depict whatever message they choose to show. In theatre for development these messages fall within the total intentions of the project. We have watched school children in Malawi use this dance to give audiences a lesson on child care. In Botswana's Laedza Batanani Popular Theatre, dance drama is specially created to repeat and emphasize the message of improvised drama which precedes it.(37)

6.4.3 Puppetry

This usually forms part of mobile information campaigns. In Malawi this has been used most extensively by the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The Extension Services section which services not just Agriculture, but Forestry and Game sections of the Ministry prepares and performs puppet shows up and down the country. The idea in such campaigns usually is to teach farmers and villagers in general, modern methods of Agriculture as well as forest and game conservation.

In spite of its popularity amongst practitioners puppetry is losing its grip on its adult audiences. It is found to be too childish in some cases, whereas in some places it is found to be culturally not admissable.(38) We intend to look at this subject in greater detail later on.

The puppet show takes on a simple story line which the audience is supposed to follow without problems. Usually it builds on stock characters which can easily be identified. Most campaigns using puppetry employ popular recorded music to go with the show. Very often the show is interspersed with such music and commentary other than the puppets' own dialogue.(39)

The problems these shows try to tackle are usually a common phenomenon amongst the audience, so that no questions about the clarity of the message arise. The setting too, is always a direct take-off of everyday life. The drama in these is almost always sustained by quarrels between characters who stand for opposing points of view in the story. The stories are mostly built around imagery from local folk-lore sources.

6.4.4 Drama

This is the most extensively used of the art forms of the lot said to come under Theatre for Development. The work in drama varies from plays performed for villagers by outside groups to plays created and performed by the villagers themselves. As the Sierra Leone experience shows:

> these dramas feature the adventures of a typical village farm family. In each story a situation is presented that a villager might encounter. Some of the dramas show

> ways that the problem might be solved, while others are left unresolved to encourage the listeners or audience to work out their own solutions. Each drama is in the vernacular languages of the people in which the project is presently being implemented.(40)

This work is presented as radio drama as well as stage presentations. The aspect of how 'the problem presented might be solved' in work, like that of Laedza Batanani Popular Theatre, sometimes becomes the king pin of all work in Theatre for Development. This is particularly so where it is felt, by the organizers that there is 'low community participation and indifference to government development efforts in the area'.(41) In such a situation, rather than solve problems, the drama is supposed to be thought provoking.

All this work is improvised. Teams of extension workers and sometimes, students collect problems prevalent in particular areas of campaigns. Using these as themes they develop improvised dramas which are rehearsed very briefly and quickly before presentation. This technique has its own flaws, especially where aesthetics are concerned. There is not enough time and thought given to the format of the presentation and styles of acting. The idea in most projects is to minimize theatrically as much as possible, so that everybody attending the project can participate without feeling inferior to another person. To attend to such issues would run contrary to the aims of some of this theatre's proponents which are, as we have said already, 'to increase participation of community members in development projects by involving them in the planning and running of the theatre programme'.(42) But to limit this theatre to such intentions also suggests it has no future. More important than this perhaps are the implications such a fastgrowing and widely used theatre has for theatre per se. This is the kind of theatre people like Soyinka, Rotimi and even Ogunde have been promoting in West Africa.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's work which seems to be the only one type, in this theatre, to care about proper theatrics starts from a script written by one author who presents it to the masses to re-write and direct en masse.(43) Talking about how I will marry when I want(44) is a product of his work in Limuru, he says he was commissioned by the Adult Literacy organizers to script a play as a supplement to the straight teaching going on at the centre. What they had in mind was a script for 'modern' theatre but in the vernacular. Artistic intentions were to be primary. When he presented the script to the centre and was made to produce it, the students (adult literacy classes) at the centre were more than willing to participate. Rehearsals were open to the whole group of students there - even if they were not participating in the play. Directing was helped by a good deal of comments from the entire public watching the rehearsals. A direct result of this was that several criticisms and alterations were made to the script. This was in terms of language as well as plot and theme. What ultimately came out (as claimed by Ngugi wa Thiong'o) was the people's own play.

The success of such work goes beyond mere numbers of people who saw the performance. Ngugi says that after the production he noticed how people came together to share ideas; families which were disintegrating became reconciled and wanted to confer amongst themselves before decisions on projects were made.(45) For the writer, the whole experience revealed a new dimension to the relationship between the writer and his readers or audience.

Returning from detention, Ngugi wa Thiong'o could not resist the temptation of producing another play. This time it was a musical Mother, Cry for Me.(46) The play was banned in rehearsal. Why is Ngugi wa Thiong'o's work being thwarted by the Kenyan authorities?

Such a question and others related to aesthetics as well as educational theory are what specific examples of this Theatre for Development from Malawi and Zambia will attempt to answer. We hope to give a full picture of this theatre through case studies.

Theatre with villagers. Sketches from a theatre workshop of the Institute for Adult Education and Extra Mural Studies, University of Freetown, Sierra Leone, November 1987 in Telu Bongor.

Chapter Seven

7. THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI

The last chapter was a general introduction to what is termed theatre for development. In this work theatre practitioners are offering their skills to other disciplines, particularly those concerned with the development of the masses. This is done in two ways. One way is to actually teach the masses theatre skills and encourage them to evolve their own theatre in which they articulate their needs. In so doing theatre practitioners believe they make the masses aware of their plight and wish for a better life. In vogue amongst those who advocate this way is the word 'conscientization' borrowed from Paolo Freire. The word has been defined as 'the process of enabling people to identify their problems as a consequence of a particular social order'.(1) Towards this goal theatre groups have either toured repertoires of stage or puppet plays considered relevant to the masses or conducted drama workshops amongst the masses which culminate in productions created on the spot. The other way is to lend more directly theatre skills to rural development projects. In this, theatre is used as a method of teaching particular issues identified as pertinent to development goals within the communities being visited by theatre practitioners together with extension workers; namely, adult literacy, hygiene, agriculture and so on.

Now we present specific examples of this work as it is being done in Malawi and Zambia. Here are descriptions of specific projects done by various theatre people in the two countries, namely:

puppetry work by the Extension Services Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture (Malawi); 1981 Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre drama workshop and a project in primary health care done by Chancellor College Theatre students (University of Malawi); Chikwakwa Theatre (University of Zambia) rural drama tours and workshops in Zambia; and the International Theatre Institute of Zambia theatre for development workshops at Chalimbana in 1979, along with an example of its results as seen in the work of Tafika Theatre of Lusaka in 1981.

7.1. PUPPET THEATRE BY THE EXTENSION SERVICES BRANCH OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE - MALAWI

7.1.1 History of the Extension Services in Malawi's Agriculture Department

Whilst it may be claimed that there are more than one agency employing theatre for educational purposes in Malawi, only the Extension Services Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources has been doing so for a long time. It is the use of puppetry that is central to this work. The history of puppetry in this department is very much linked to that of the ministry's attempts to improve agricultural production in the country. These attempts started off as a means to commercial ends rather than food production towards self-sufficiency for the people. Although organized government involvement in the field of agriculture did not start until 1909 in Malawi, 'the first recorded instance of direct assistance to village farmers by government' appeared in 1903.(2) The government, through its District Administrative Officers, encouraged farmers to grow cotton which could be sold to the outside world. As a way of helping the farmers to improve their yield the government issued and distributed leaflets written in Chichewa. These showed farmers recommended methods of cultivating the crop. At this point there were no extension services.

It was not until 1909, when the Department of Agriculture was formally established that any attempts at extension work were made. This new department took over the control of cotton growing. It also introduced tobacco growing in the country. But even with the setting up of this department, there was no obvious concerted policy towards controlling agricultural behaviour amongst Africans by the government although educational institutions encouraged agriculture amongst their subjects.(3) This had to wait until 1946. And when it appeared it centred on enactment of 'legislation to prescribe certain soil conserving methods like contour ridging and other land-use practices, with installation of regional boards to enforce them. Fines and short term prison sentences were not unusual'.(4)

The need to encourage better methods of agriculture seems to have become even more acute in the 1948-49 Great Famine.(5) It was after this that real attempts at extension services in Agriculture began. Following the famine some examination of the country's agrarian problems was done by the government. The idea behind this was to develop a policy:

> for the improvement of standards of living beyond subsistence livelihood, it was felt that training centres and extension schools were essential aids in the attainment of the objectives.(6)

Thus by 1958 a number of training schools were opened in the three regions of the country to provide: courses for chiefs, cultivators and farmers; and refresher courses for teachers and instructors. Apart from the legal enforcement the Master Farmer idea was created in which farmers with good cultivation success were paid special premiums. During the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, such methods were supplemented by others. The Department of Agriculture printed a crop production programme - giving market information, guaranteed prices and production targets - which was widely distributed.(7) In this publication were also included hints on the best way to grow certain crops. Extension workers were now employed and sent out to villages to give direct advice to farmers, using posters, pamphlets and illustrated magazines.(8) But in spite of this the major tasks of the Department of Agriculture were regulatory in nature. Conservation and husbandry rules were made and enforced by field staff who prosecuted offenders.(9) This aroused antagonism in the masses, and hampered all efforts to teach farmers more advanced systems of farming.

It is no surprise therefore that all legislation relating to agriculture was repealed on acquisition of independence. The Department of Agriculture was 'directed to abandon regulatory practices and intensify development through education'.(10) In trying to meet this calling the Extension Services Branch was set up. 'For twenty years it has been operating a fleet of modern, well equipped Mobile Cinema Landrovers called "Yellow Vans" and has won a high reputation for the way it spreads agricultural information throughout the country'.(11) Puppetry was adopted as one of the various methods of teaching farmers new and better methods of agriculture in the country.

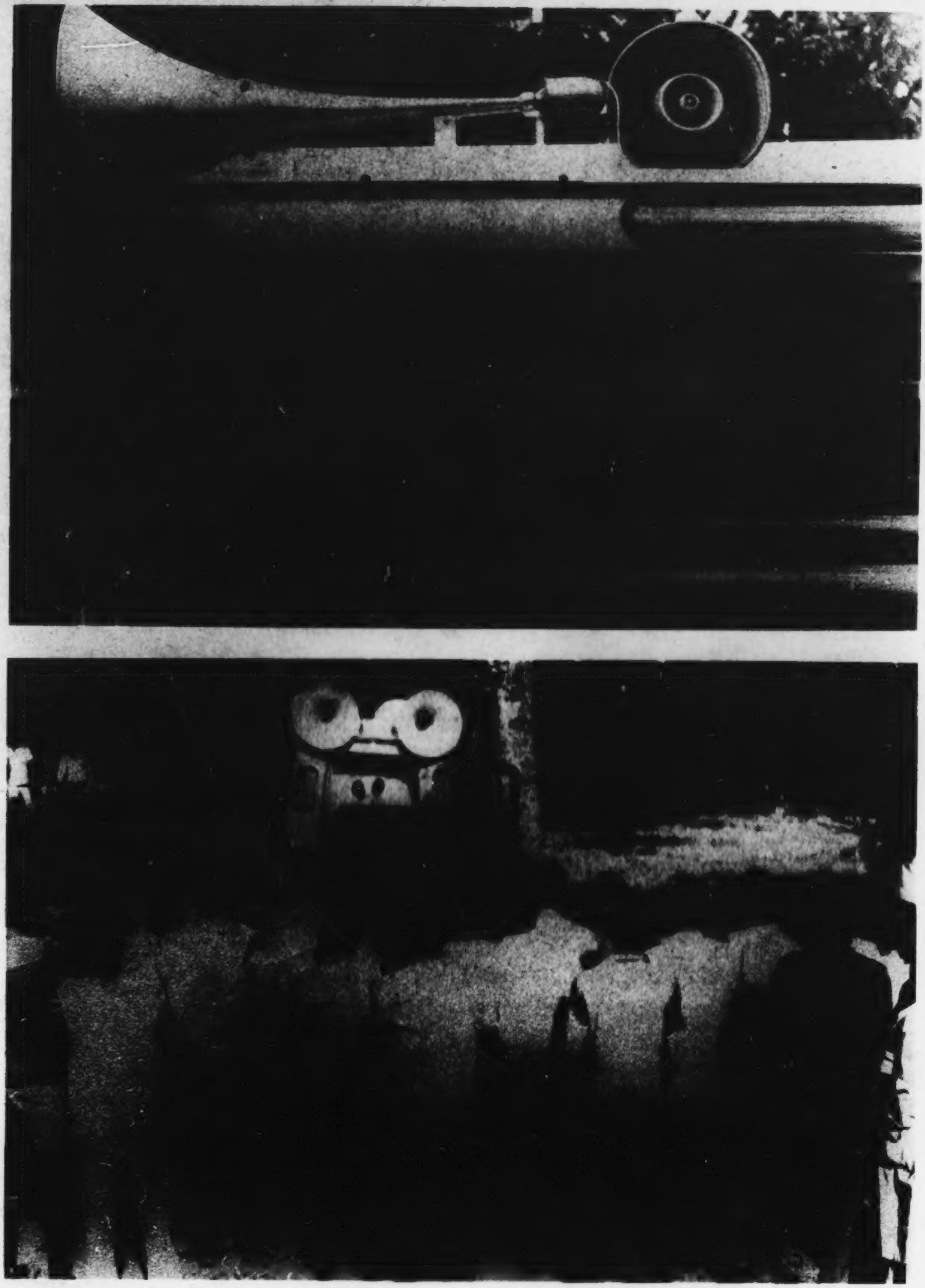
This department services other sections of what is now the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. (Agriculture, Veterinary and Forestry department).(12) From time to time Extension Services programmes include material relevant to Ministry of Health extension work too. To do its job properly the Extension Aids Branch has seven sections, namely: editorial, photography, publications, radio, cinema, mobile and maintenance, and evaluation/action research. It is the 'editorial' and 'mobile/maintenance' sections that are particularly central to puppetry work in the department. The 'editorial' section also produces the farmers' magazine Za Achikumbi (Farmers' News) which enjoys a circulation of 32,000(13) and puppet play 'messages'. It also carries out general editorial and translation work relevant to the needs of the department. The 'mobile and maintenance' section tours with films and puppet shows around the country according to pre-arranged schedules throughout most of the year.

7.1.2. History of Puppetry in Extension Services Branch

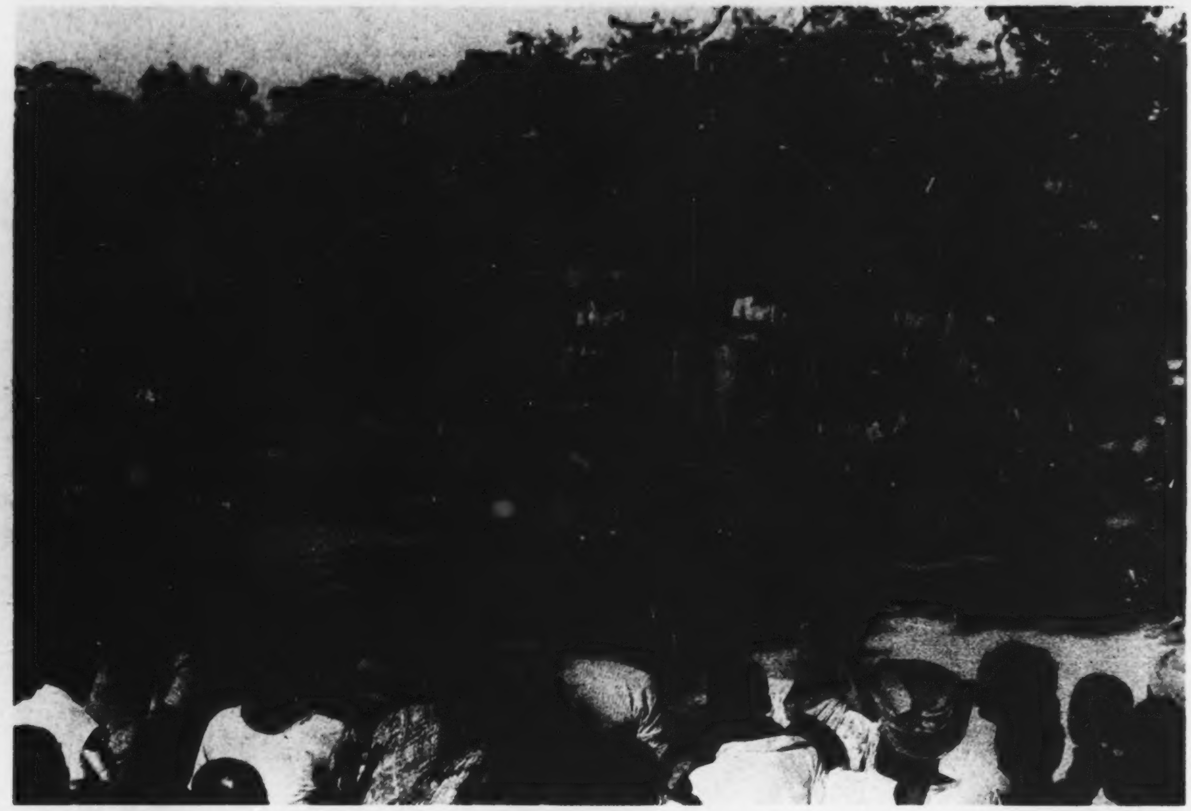
Use of puppets in the Extension Services Branch was started in September, 1964 by Mrs P. Bean (an expatriate Publications Officer at the time).(14) Initially work in puppetry was done as a joint programme with the Department of Information as part of the 1964 Election Campaign. So puppetry in this department was not necessarily meant for agricultural development. It was for its potential for political propaganda that it was adopted. The puppets that were on show sang slogans like 'One Man One Vote'. They talked about the removal of the 'requirement' of property for voters. It was only after elections and independence that the Extension Services Branch started, on an experimental basis, to use puppetry for agricultural as well as health care goals. Now puppets are a regular offering during Cinema campaigns made by the department. Special personnel are recruited and trained to work on puppetry.

7.1.3 Preparation of 'puppets' and 'messages'(15)

The Extension Services Branch employs a full time technical assistant whose duties are to make puppets and their costumes. At the moment there is a woman doing this work.(16) She works on a simple pattern. The department uses three basic characters in its puppet theatre, namely: a man, his wife and an agriculture instructor. So the technical assistant works on a set of three puppets. These are hand (glove) puppets. No attempt has been made to use string puppets. When the puppets are ready the radio section provides matching music to go along with their presentation when the time comes. This usually is South African (black) Simanje-manje or East African Rumba music. It is the sort of music that villagers will have heard over the local radio.



A puppet show and the spectators. No community involvement



The theatre team of the Chancellor College, University of Malawi.
Extension workers and villagers participate in performance

As the puppets are being made other people prepare messages to be passed on to the various audiences which are expected at shows. Such a job requires expert knowledge of the subject to be treated, therefore it involves actual agriculture-trained personnel in the department. All messages so prepared are vetted by an editorial board before they are recorded along with the dramas that are improvised for the puppets. This board includes people qualified in agriculture as well as mass media techniques. Referring to these messages the Principal Extension Services Officer says that:

> the scripts are developed on the basis of the major agricultural activities in the particular areas at the particular time.(17)

What he means here is that scripts follow a calendar which is divided into sections according to agricultural activity relevant to each period of the year in the country. A typical year in Malawi may be divided into two seasons, namely: dry and wet seasons. Agricultural activities going with each season are as follows:

DRY SEASON (July, August September and October)	harvesting rest (follow) clearing and preparation of gardens
WET SEASON (November, December, January, February, March April, May, June).	planting applying fertilizer

The preparation of scripts looks at this sort of break-down and tries to accommodate the needs of each section. Scripts also try to include material not necessarily pegged to seasonal changes like: the honouring of government credit facilities extended to farmers and good animal husbandry. In order to make sure that correct advice goes to each area at the correct time puppet programmes for each van are made at Extension Services Branch headquarters in Lilongwe. The message at this stage is very brief and precise. It does not aim at creating a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. It is just a straightforward talk about agriculture. There is nothing theatrical about it at this stage. The theatrical dimension is added to it at the recording session.

It is the radio section of the department which takes care of the recording. With the vetted message before them the editorial section prepares a skeleton dramatic script to go along with it. So a script, in outline form, is produced and given to actors, in the radio section, who improvise and use their own words when recording most of the play. The ending of the play which is very didactic is a direct rendition of the vetted message from the editorial board. The idea of the exercise is to play these recordings as puppeteers manipulate their puppets at shows and thus provide dialogue to them.

7.1.4 Presentation of Puppet Shows

Equipped with three puppets, recordings of some agricultural message, music and a Landrover specially fitted with a puppet stage and loudspeakers at the back, a team of puppet operators go to the field to do their work. The 'mobile and maintenance' section of the department has trained personnel in puppet presentation techniques.

Usually a local extension worker introduces the puppet play and summarizes its message after it has come to an end. When the play has been introduced the puppet operator takes his position behind the stage. The recorded dialogue is then played through loudspeakers whilst the puppet operator moves puppets at appropriate times to indicate which character is speaking. Throughout the entire show the operator remains hidden behind the stage.

The stage is built at the back of the Landrover:

> A vertical board fills the lower two-thirds of the rear entrance of the vehicle with a horizontal shelf (runs) across the top. The space above this represents the stage and simple hand-drawn curtains are suspended from an expanding curtain rod at the front. Behind this is a plain backcloth suspended in the same way. The operator sits at or slightly above the vehicle floor level. The backcloth screens his face from the audience and the rest of the back of the vehicle is screamed off by boards and curtains. The soundtrack is played on an open reel (to reel) tape recorder ... powered by an alternator driver by the vehicle's engine ... The back door of the vehicle is held open during performances.(18)

Extension Services Branch controls the procedure to be followed when puppet shows are on. Apart from this there is strict guidance on how many shows should be held per day. Although several performances are held each day in any one area during a campaign lasting about one week, the department insists that:

> Not more than six puppet shows should be done per day from Monday to Thursday and only three shows should be done on Friday. Friday afternoon should be reserved for re-fuelling and cleaning equipment.(19)

Puppet shows are done during the day. They complement film shows which are held during the night. The venues for such shows are carefully selected to allow maximum attendance.

Announcements about all shows are done well in advance by local field staff. When vans arrive in a particular area, the public address system fixed to each one of them is used to announce the arrival of the campaign team and when and where exactly shows will be held. The Malawi Broadcasting Corporation, through special programmes for farmers also makes announcements about such campaigns. A typical presentation during a campaign follows this pattern:

A.	Announcement:	Popular music played through loudspeakers, to attract attention of would be audience, until sizeable group collects. Local extension worker makes an introduction.
B.	Puppet show:	
C.	End of show:	Local extension worker summarizes the message of the campaign. If there are questions, they are dealt with here.

Although all the work is done by the puppet operator, whenever he is out in the field he is directly responsible to the resident or local Development Officer or Project Officer who actually works amongst the farming community from day to day. Having arrived in a place the puppet operator along with his colleague - the driver, operator who shows films in the evenings of the campaign - plays all tape messages to the Development Officer. This is done so that he knows in advance what they contain. Since he plays the role of master of ceremony at the shows, it is necessary that he knows what the team brings into his area. Instructions from Extension Services Branch Headquarters state that:

> ... during film shows it will be only the Development Officer or his appointee who will comment on agricultural films. This means that they will introduce the film and summarise the main points on the film after the film is run through.(20)

This holds true for puppet shows too. The people who operate puppets are really 'puppetry' experts not agriculturists.

7.1.5 Observations and Comment

Bradfield says that such

> puppet shows have proved popular and effective in Malawi as part of fertilizer and other campaigns.(21)

He goes on to suggest the superiority of such work over straight drama which relies on actual bodies thus:

> Puppets are easy to make, and it is easy to put on a puppet play. With human actors several people are needed at each performance and rehearsals are necessary to ensure that the characters are word-perfect.(22)

Current observations support all this and claim that puppets on the whole are very well accepted by the rural population although some extension workers using them have met 'some problems in areas where people dance (Nyau).(23) Such problems arose where people saw puppets as demeaning the dance. Elsewhere people have simply seen puppetry as childish and refused to take it seriously even if they went along to watch shows.(24)

Extension Services Branch keeps records of shows done and estimated audience sizes. The driver-operators make these on the spot. Field staff in attendance spot check them. Records so far made show that about 100 people see puppet shows each day.(25) In 1980, in spite of a shortage of funds, 4,356 puppet shows were held up and down the country (with an average attendance of 76 people per show).(26) The ratio of each age group at such shows depends, to a large extent, on the area where the show is taking place. Where the shows are seen as childish the majority of the audience will be children. In some places pregnant women will not go to watch puppets for fear of giving birth to puppets instead of ordinary human beings. In such a situation the audience will be predominantly of men and children. Where they see them as a parody of existing indigenous cultural behaviour they are resented. Only very few people, especially children, will attend shows in such a situation.

These objections are made purely on cultural grounds. They arise from the fact that puppetry is not an indigenous tradition amongst Malawians. As it has already been said, this work was started in the Extension Services Branch by an expatriate officer. How much thought was given to the possibility of such problems is not indicated by any of the present personnel engaged in this work. Although there is an evaluation/action research team which has actually identified the problems, no serious thought on the extent to which puppetry should go on in certain problem areas has been gone into. In spite of these objections puppetry work still goes on.

The fact that farmers do not boycott shows in total does not necessarily mean willingness or acceptance on their part. Several factors must be weighed before such a conclusion is reached. How much of their attendance springs from the fact that this work is being carried out by government agents and would be credit facility and market controllers? The rural farmer can not afford to antagonize himself against such a powerful hand. The politics of extension work in all this should not be minimized.

Rejection of puppetry by the ordinary farmer may be internalized to such an extent that it is missed by practitioners. The 'parody' aspect identified by the Nyau members should be looked at in greater detail here. A masquerade in Nyau society is considered an animal. Being such no rational behaviour is attributed to it. In fact when a man wears a mask he ceases to be a human being. He belongs to the world of the supernatural which is traditionally seen as totally irrational. No logical thought is expected from the masquerader nor from his world. It would be interesting to see how much of this is transferred to the puppet in the agriculture show. If there is such a transfer what becomes of any messages invested in the puppet play is easy to imagine. They are perhaps only a big joke.

But the problem goes further than this if one is to be even more sceptic. How is an adult who engages in such work viewed by his audience? How much of this thinking affects all agriculture extension work?

7.2. THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP AT MBALACHANDA RURAL GROWTH CENTRE (Malawi) ORGANIZED BY THE CHANCELLOR COLLEGE TRAVELLING THEATRE (UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI) FROM 15th TO 25th JULY, 1981

In July, 1981, the Chancellor College Travelling Theatre was invited by the Office of the President and Cabinet to visit a rural growth centre at Mbalachanda in the Northern Region of Malawi. The workshop described below.was a response to this invitation.

7.2.1 Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre

This is an administrative centre just opened in the Northern Region of Malawi.(27) It is so called because it has been set up in a place where hitherto there was nothing except bush and scattered villages, in the hope that by bringing together such services as a health clinic, primary school, community development assistance, homecraft workers, post office, craft workshop, small business advice and a market it will spur economic growth around itself.

7.2.2 The Workshop on Theatre for Development

The Chancellor College Travelling Theatre has not opened up new ground in conducting such a workshop.(28) The difference between the established extension workers' approach and the

Travelling Theatre's is in expertise and emphasis of purpose. In Mbalachanda, of course, none of the extension workers had attempted to employ any theatre arts to support them in their work.

Since the Travelling Theatre's formation in 1971, its repertoire has usually consisted of published plays in English, with occasional improvised drama built out of folk tales. There had never been any attempt to present 'vernacular' drama. Consequently, it has always worked in schools or town halls.

At the invitation of the government to perform at this centre, the Travelling Theatre altered its usual bill to cater for what it considered would be the needs of the people of Mbalachanda and surrounding villages. The government's idea of our visit to the Rural Growth Centre was simply to provide entertainment for the people there at a splendid community hall built together with the various houses in the centre. In a way, the Travelling Theatre was being asked to justify the presence of the community hall. Instead of fulfilling this calling alone, the Travelling Theatre chose to hold a workshop on theatre for development for eight days with the extension workers based at the centre, then to proceed to show the results of the workshop in the villages as well as the hall.

7.2.3 Planning

The Travelling Theatre gathered, through the central administration of the Rural Growth Centre project, a serious of problems that might be experienced by the extension workers in their daily undertakings amongst the people they worked with (and these were made up of villagers and some farm labourers at nearby tobacco estates). A few of the problems identified in advance were falling attendance at adult literacy classes and refusal by the villagers (particularly headmen) to accept utilisation of facilities located in places other than their villages.

Such problems were sought to give the Travelling Theatre team material for building a demonstration sketch in order to give the workers some idea of what the workshop was aimed at. All sketches were to be done in the vernacular languages of the area, namely, Tumbuka and Chicheŵa. An improvised sketch was prepared by some members of the company. Armed with food and a Landrover, the trip to Mbalachanda (400 - 500 miles away from Chancellor College) was on. The Travelling Theatre team consisted of nine people. A diary entry provides a more vivid description of the whole workshop.

DEPARTURE:	15th July, 1981
ARRIVAL:	16th July, 1981.

7.2.4 The workshop

16th July, 1981

Morning: (9.00 a.m) Meeting the connection (a business advisor to small business owners around Mbalachanda). After this we meet other officers at the centre. Explaining our project to the extension workers. This included a demonstration of what the Travelling Theatre had prepared followed by a critical discussion of content and presentation. Workers

Theatre workshops in Malawi...

... and in Sierra Leone

were quick to comment on the aesthetic aspects of the presentation (demanding reality in props and costuming), but gradually they moved into thematic considerations. The demonstration was geared explaining possible causes for the problems so far identified. The emphasis was on understanding that 'drama' was being used to express an idea. The morning session ended in trying to identify other problems experienced by the extension workers themselves whilst carrying out their duties (i.e., what do they find to be the most common problems they have to deal with on their visits to the villages)?. Broke off for lunch at noon.

Afternoon: (2.00 p.m.) Back to the community centre. Opened afternoon session with some theatre games. The idea being to get the Travelling Theatre team, primary school teachers (who joined the workshop too) and extension workers to k[illegible] and trust each other. Thirty minutes of games clea[illegible] 'embarrassment complexes', people began to be free [illegible] each other. The group split into smaller ones with the workers as the basis for discussing the type of areas to be attended to. There were basically three extension services areas chosen: (a) preventive health - digging pit latrines, garbage heaps and general cleanliness in the home; (b) modern methods of agriculture and the agriculture instructor; and (c) adult literacy. Three members of the Travelling Theatre provided leadership in costing and building improvisations out of identified problems in each are (trying to strike a balance between theme and aesthetics). Group breaks for the day at 5.00 p.m. The plays are to be in a mixture of Chichewa and Tumbuka.

17th July, 1981

Morning: Continuation of 'group' work. Developing the improvisations.

Afternoon: The three groups come together to show each other what had been achieved so far followed by discussion of the performances (centering on themes rather than the acting). There were three sketches developed.

SYNOPSES OF SKETCHES

Sketch I: 'Kufunika kwa ukhondo' (The need for cleanliness).
Cast: Chief, Chief's wife, Chief's friend, Health Assistant.

Scene 1: The chief is visited by the Health Assistant who has come to seek permission to carry out a survey of latrines in the village. Permission granted, a date is agreed on. The chief's own compound is to be the first one to be visited.

Scene 2: Chief and his wife left to discuss the survey. Wife points out how shameful it will be to be discovered as a family without a latrine, and even suggests he gets some labour to dig one quickly; but chief does not see the need especially when there is so much bush around. Argument interrupted by arrival of a friend.

Scene 3: Visitor offered some sweet beer which causes stomach upset. Visitor wants to go to the toilet, chief points to the bush. Having no choice, visitor goes. In visitor's absence wife fumes, pointing out how ridiculous and shameful all this is. How can a chief be showing his visitors to the bush to relieve themselves? Chief shouts, but stops on reappearance of the visitor who only comes in to say farewell rather hurriedly.

Scene 4: Next scene starts with wife reminding chief of Health Assistant's visit to the village. Chief says he won't be around as he has to visit a friend somewhere. This is just to avoid meeting him. Soon after having his lunch he goes off to visit his friend. Health Assistant arrives soon after and he is disappointed to find the chief has gone away, but he soon finds out why. He talks to the chief's wife about the need for having a latrine in the compound. Wife agrees to everything and reveals that she has tried to persuade her husband to dig one, but to no avail. Health Assistant departs with the promise of another visit.

Scene 5: Chief is visiting his friend. He stands up and excuses himself, going into the bush to releave himself. Whilst chief is away, Health Assistant arrives to inspect. During greeting formalities the chief rushes on to the scene, running away from the bush. Everybody is startled, but chief cannot explain. Soon after this he bids everybody farewell (in a way running away from

Health Assistant who has been trying to explain that he had just been to the chief's house).

Scene 6: Chief is back home with wife who is explaining the visit of the Health Assistant, but she discovers her husband is absent-minded. On enquiry she is told of how her husband the chief, was nearly stoned and clubbed by kids chasing mice as he was trying to relieve himself in the bush around his friend's compound. Wife is outraped, shouts at the chief and emphasizes that this should be a lesson to him to have a latrine in his compound. She then turns to the audience with rhetorical questions on the shamefulness of not having a latrine for the home. Chief stops her amidst agreement that 'o.k. I will dig one, but no need to tell all the world what has happened to me'. The sketch ends with the chief looking for a hoe to go and start digging the pit latrine.

Sketch II: 'Kumanya Mbwananga' (Knowledge is Freedom)

Cast: Mr. Phiri, Mrs Phiri, Son (Phiri), Mr. Mkandawire, Mrs Mkandawire, Teacher and Narrator.

Scene 1: The play opens with a narrator entering the circle to tell a story about two families just returning from selling their tobacco crop. One family could count their money (Mr. and Mrs Phiri), whilst the other (Mr. and Mrs Mkandawire) could not. They help each other to do so and find they have both earned themselves 60 Kwacha from their crop. They retire to their homes where they are called to a public meeting which a local party man talks about a literacy school being introduced into the village and encourages everybody to join. Mr. Phiri is not ready to waste his time at such a school, so he walks out to occupy himself with more worthy matters. After all, he can count!

Scene 2: Mr. Phiri returns home to find his wife preparing food for him and their son. As they eat, the literacy classes issue comes up, but he shrugs it off. Soon after Mr. Mkandawire comes in and brings up the same subject, cherishing the opportunity of learning how to count like his friend. But Mr. Phiri refuses to have anything to do with such 'nonsense!'. They break conversation by leaving for a drink.

Scene 3: A mime scene of a class in session with the narrator explaining what is going on. As he does so he asks questions about the goodness of such a school. He presents pros and cons, leaving it to the audience to decide. Whilst Mr. Phiri has refused to attend classes, his wife does. One day he passes by the school and sees the teacher leaning over his wife's shoulder as he tries to help her in her writing. Angry, Mr. Phiri goes home.

Scene 4: Back at his house, Mr. Phiri is furious; he finds faults in everything his wife is doing. He thinks she is neglecting her duties by going to school - especially at her age! He says he cannot see how she can sit together with her son in the same class. So Mrs Phiri explains that the school she attends is for adults only. She goes on to brag that she can now write, read and count. Mr. Phiri does not believe it until a test is given to her (with the son as the examiner). Then comes the issue of the school teacher leaning over her shoulder - petty jealousy which she manages to deal with. But she cannot convince her husband to join literacy school.

Scene 5: Two years later (filled in by the narrator). Again the two families are returning from selling their produce. Tables have turned now in a subtle way. Mr. and Mrs Mkandawire who could not count at first, can now do so. But more than this, his family has earned double what Mr. and Mrs Phiri have got from their sales. Mr. Phiri cannot believe it, but his colleague assures him that this happened because he can now read instructions which go with fertilizer for himself rather than just applying it anyhow. Mr. Phiri unhappily gives in to the idea of adult literacy.

Scene 6: The narrator comes in to ask further questions (to the audience) as he rounds the scene up.

Sketch III: 'Nzeru Zayekha' Mr. Know it all)

Cast: Mr. Chakufwa and son, Mr. Mahara, Agriculture Instructor, and Mr. Chidongo.

Scene 1: Beer drinking party in the village where gentlemen are discussing the use of luck charms in order to get bigger yields from their gardens. Mr. Chakufwa claims to be an authority on this. An agricultural instructor joins in the drinking. The conversation on 'charms' stops. Mr. Chakufwa is particularly unhappy to be in the company of this instructor whose job is not only to teach modern methods of agriculture, but also to discourage the use of charms. More to the discomfort of Mr. Chakufwa, the instructor introduces the subject of a demonstration lesson in 'tobacco care'. He suggests they use Mr. Chakufwa's garden for this. Mr. Chakufwa is flattered. He leaves for home in high spirits.

Scene 2: In Mr. Chakufwa's garden. He is working with his son in preparation for the 'demonstration day'. Other farmers trickle in and the instructor arrives last. The demonstration is done, everybody goes home leaving Mr. Chakufwa and his son behind. As soon as they disappear Mr. Chakufwa destroys everything the instructor had done despite the son's demonstration.

Scene 3: Agriculture instructor pays a visit to Mr. Chakufwa's garden and shouts at him for disobeying his instructions. But Mr. Chakufwa sends him away saying he knows what he is doing. Mr. Chakufwa goes home to attend to family matters, getting his son to go to school as the holiday is over.

Scene 4: Sometime later Mr. Chakufwa in his garden, which has failed. He goes to examine his colleague's (Mr. Mahara) and he finds it's doing well. The same is true of Mr. Chidongo's. As he is busy admiring Mr. Chidongo's garden, the owner appears and asks what is going on. A quarrel follows with Mr. Chakufwa claiming that his colleagues have cast an evil spell on his crop. Whilst this is going on, Mr. Mahara returns a parcel of 'charms' which he had collected from Mr. Chakufwa, saying that he does not need it anymore. Mr. Chakufwa breaks down and goes back to his garden asking why this has to happen to him. He ends by asking the audience to answer him.

18th July, 1981: FREE DAY

19th July, 1981

Morning
(9.00 a.m.)

The Travelling Theatre works on translating a play from English to the vernacular and adapting it for presentation during the workshop. The Lizard's Tail(29) is chosen because it was already in the year's (1980/81) repertoire. Its theme and story is very local, and therefore very likely to go down well even with village audiences. Adaptation includes topics on 'health' and 'adult literacy'.

Afternoon:
(2.00 p.m.)

Continuation of morning work: recasting and rehearsing (since the company did not include the original cast with them on the trip).

20th July, 1981

Morning:
(9.00 p.m.)

Most extension workers have to attend to their 'normal' duties, so we decide to continue work on The Lizard's Tail which does not involve any of them. Later in the morning meeting with area secretary for the Malawi Congress Party, to ask for his help in organising venues in the villages. He sees us in rehearsal and goes away very enthusiastic about our exercise. (During the meeting we quickly brief him on what our work is all about). In all the improvisations heavy emphasis is on the cultural/educational aspects. We emphasize the need for follow-up discussion with the audiences after every performance, so that we can exchange ideas/views on what happens in the plays. We agree to perform at six venues; four villages, one tobacco estate and the community centre.

Afternoon: Rehearsing two plays ('adult literacy' and 'health').
(2.00 p.m.)

Discussion of next day's programme. We agree that the programmes in the villages will be made up of two of our plays and an indigenous dance from the villagers themselves.

21st July, 1981

Morning: All teachers not available in the morning as they have to invigilate examinations in the school; fortunately none of them is involved in the morning's programme. A visit to Village A (Chikoma). There were no people on our arrival, but drumming does the trick. Within a few minutes of the drumming, people come. We are shown to the 'Bwalo'(ground) where the performances are to be held. Two plays plus their own re-enactment of a typical 'peace time' village beer drinking party. The discussion following our performances was not forthcoming except for a general comment made by the village headman endorsing the messages of the plays.

Afternoon: Performance at village B (Jeremiya). Word got round to the village that we were coming (thanks to the Malawi Congress Party secretary's efforts), but there is nobody except a few women. Explanation is that most men have gone to attend a collective working group which was working to raise funds for village affairs (Chilimika or Chijayo). Group waits, singing, clapping and drumming. One hour later the men show up. We go straight into performance. Two plays: 'Health' and the adaptation. The villagers do a dance called Kamchoma. The discussion at the end had the village headman making comments on how entertaining and educative the two plays were. He also admits that pit latrines are scarce in his village. His own house had an old one which had fallen in, but he was building another house with a new toilet. Thus the old toilet need not be attended to. One man asked about the logic of one of the plays (the adaptation had a court scene with one of the principal witnesses absent). Finally the Health Extension worker took the floor and hammered in the need for observing what the plays talked about: digging pit latrines, garbage pits, etc. He then went on to give them some technical details, like how deep a latrine should be. This was in response to some technical questions.

Evening: Performance at the community centre purely for the entertainment of the residents at the growth centre. There were about three hundred people in attendance.

22nd July, 1981

Morning (9.00 a.m.) Group goes to village C (Yoramu Ng'ambi). We found the chief waiting for us. Gradually the audience builds up. 'Health' and the adaptation were the bill here. During the discussion the chief, who is also the area chairman of the Malawi Congress Party, commented on the performances along realistic lines (asked why we did not have proper props). In closing his speech he encouraged his people to comment on what they had seen and made an admission that he did not have a toilet himself, but promised to look into the matter. The Health Extension worker confirmed the importance of having a latrine in the home. He also went over technical details of digging a pit latrine.

Afternoon: (2.00 p.m.) Group goes to Mukwa Estate. Finds a very large audience already seated and waiting for the performance. The two plays done here were 'Literacy' and 'Agriculture'. During the literacy play, comments and questions were being asked. At a certain point in 'Literacy' the narrator comments on the need for sending a wife in the home to an adult literacy class; one of the audience asked 'what if the wife uses the money for fees or booze?' At another point in the same play one man challenged to be shown where the adult literacy centre was. These questions were turned to at the end of the shows. The question of the location of the literacy centre was answered by the manager of the estate. Apparently there had been no such centre at the place until not long before our visit. Perhaps this is why the adult literacy man had avoided coming with us throughout the visits. Most people saw the need for knowing how to read and write. One woman cited the example of a person who could not read the 'destination board' on a bus and how embarrassed he feels to ask others to tell him which should be his bus or when he discovers he has boarded the wrong bus.

23rd July, 1981

Morning: FREE

Afternoon: Performance at village D. (Kwemani). Initially the whole village seems deserted. No proper explanation given. Gradually (one hour later) people trickle in. Speculation begins amongst the cast (perhaps word about the messages of the plays has already reached the village which has no latrines in sight). The play performed was 'Health'. It was getting dark. Discussion here centred on aesthetics. Very few men showed up despite adequate advance notice. They end the visit with their own performanace of an indigenous dance. Signs of wear and tear showing in the Travelling Theatre Company.

Evening: Last performance in the community hall. Audience made up of not just residents at the centre, but even villagers who had already been visited during the daytime performance. The workshop group was joined by local 'Vimbuza' (Possession dance) dancers.

24th July, 1981

Morning:	FREE
Afternoon: (2.00 p.m.)	Evaluation of the work done. During this session there was concern expressed at the way some extension workers had avoided attending the actual performances. Reasons for this were explored. Some workers felt that the workshop actually exposed their own inefficiency, quite apart from helping them to get messages across in a different way from what they were used to. Questions of continuity were raised.

25th July, 1981: Departure (Back to Zomba).

(e) Comment

The purpose of the workshop from the government's point of view was 'to provide a forum of entertainment, of culture exchange, of education and of team spirit at the centre among the extension workers and also the local people...'(30) That all these were achieved remains to be seen in what follows after the workshop. Because although the plays were taken out to the villages, the workshop really aimed at the extension workers. The Travelling Theatre aimed at getting the extension workers to recognize the potential of tackling their work from a more imaginative angle than they had been doing so far. This shows clearly that what was being created is in fact 'propaganda theatre'. Although there was no particular political statement being made, a particular way of teaching and living was being suggested to the extension workers and the villagers respectively. The propaganda embodied in the experience was dialectical. Whilst the plays were preaching a way of behaviour endorsed by the ministries from which the extension workers come, the audience was given a chance to question the content of the plays or challenge the extension workers as government agents to provide services necessary for the fulfillment of what was being demanded of them as villagers. At one venue a member of the audience asked 'where is the school?' when the 'Literacy' play was being performed. The group's consciousness was being awakened. Feedback was becoming a possibility because the tendency to believe that villagers were mere vessels to be filled with knowledge was being broken. The evaluation session at the end of the workshop also revealed some of the weaknesses the extension workers had in fulfilling their duties amongst the villagers. This 'dialectical' nature of the experience is necessary for the survival of any 'theatre for development' programme, because it keeps everybody on their toes (without the feeling of complacency in the extension workers, who in fact represent the government).

The effectiveness of these performances did not depend on just the themes or content of the plays and questions at the end of each performance, but also on the attitude of the Travelling Theatre team before the extension workers, which was carried over into the villages by the whole workshop team, plus the way the plays were developed and presented at the various venues. Several details had to be taken care of right at the 'creation' stage of the improvisations. 'Health' was aimed at the chief rather than the masses in the way the 'hare' is used in folk tales. This had the effect of defusing resentment from the general public and also of affording criticism without undermining the chief's credibility. Having the chief as the centre of attention in the play also suggests prompting the leadership of the village to take the initiative in carrying out what the plays were preaching. 'Literacy' used the narrator, in the folktale sense, (with unbiased thought-provoking questions embedded in his narrative, unlike those of a typical folk tale; some Brechtian chorus/singer type). An attempt was also made by the actors, to add depth to otherwise stock characters who would normally be treated in a rather superficial way. In this respect plays attempted to direct emphasis to other less didactic issues (this was particularly true in The Lizard's Tail adaptation) which then became normal to the lives of the characters, and thus to allow the audience to enjoy watching the play without creating a 'defensive' distancing from its message. The question of language was also important in this exercise. By reverting to vernacular languages, the workshop team came down from their 'university' pedestal and joined the masses on their own grounds. More than this, the actors could go about their business without too much worry about 'second language' competence. In order to break the feeling of being a victimized audience, actors sat with them and acted in the round. Superficially, when it comes to the performance time questions of aesthetics may seem to be of little significance in propaganda theatre, but where you are introducing this amongst people who perhaps have a different type of theatre in their life, you have to spend some time looking into it.(31) The technique of asking questions directly addressed to the audience by the actors is another thing which needs close attention in preparation. Unless these aesthetic issues form an important part of 'theatre for development' in Africa, this theatre is doomed to reduction into everyday 'alien' fun without any didactic effect.

Since Mbalachanda, Chancellor College has moved on to more theatre for development work which looks like more effective both aesthetically and educationally. An example of this work is the Primary Health Care work which follows in the coming pages.

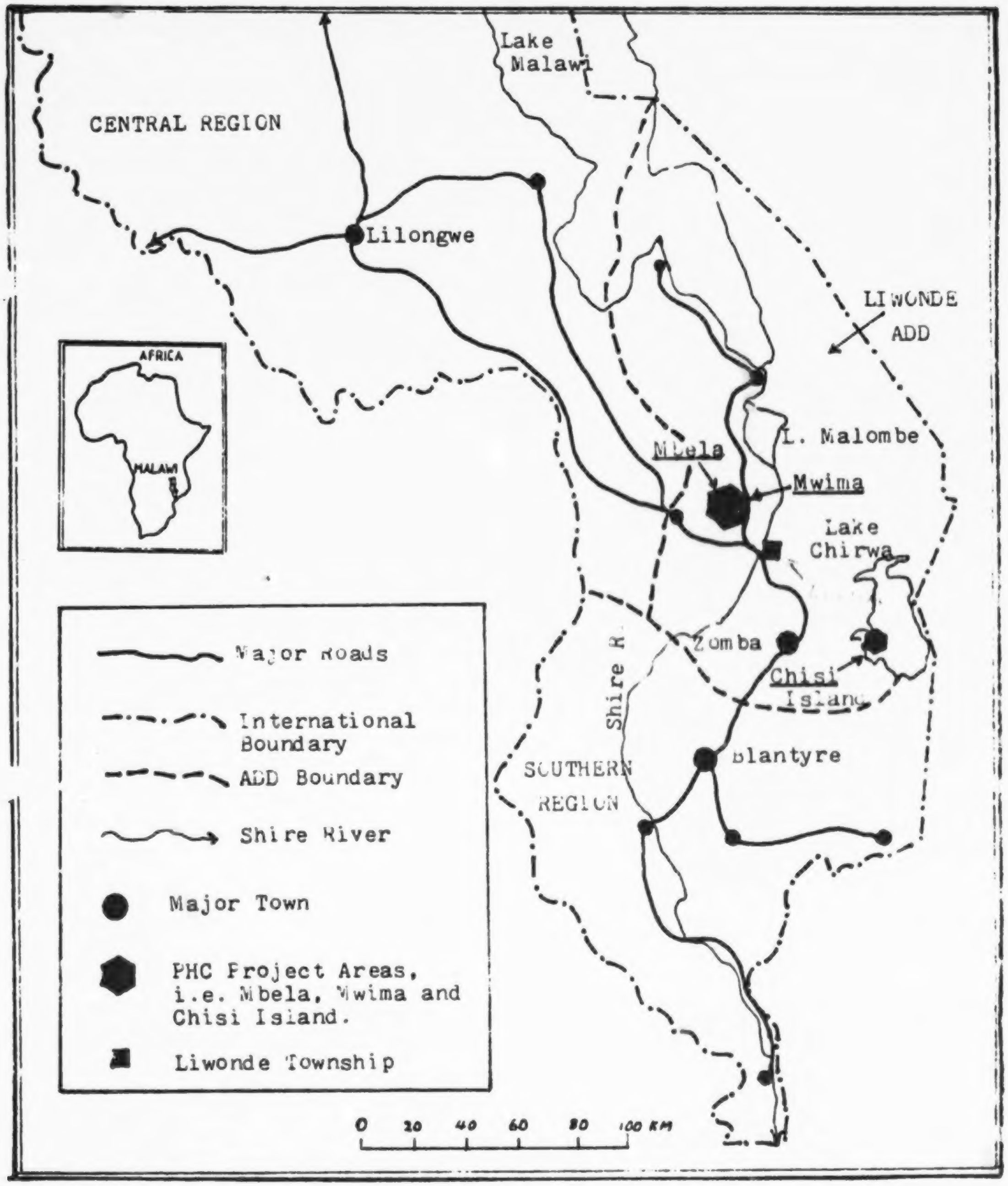
7.3. POPULAR THEATRE AND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN MALAWI

Here we document an example of a successful story of an innovative approach in health information and education in a number of villages in the Southern Region of Malawi (see Figure 1). The story is organised in four main parts. The first part looks at the strategy used for Primary Health Care in Malawi especially with respect to the diffusion of health information and education. Secondly it examines the existing situation in Mbela and Mwima areas before the Liwonde ADD Primary Health Care (PHC) Unit was initiated. Thirdly the section describes the main approach that has been used to

---

ADD: Agricultural Development Division

FIGURE 1: LIWONDE ADD IN THE SOUTHERN REGION OF MALAWI


Lake Malawi
CENTRAL REGION
Lilongwe
LIWONDE ADD
AFRICA
MALAWI
L. Malombe
Mbela
Mwima
Lake Chirwa
Zomba
Chisi Island
Shire R.
Blantyre
SOUTHERN REGION
Major Roads
International Boundary
ADD Boundary
Shire River
Major Town
PHC Project Areas, i.e. Mbela, Mwima and Chisi Island.
Liwonde Township
0
20
40
60
80
100 KM

2

motivate the people of these areas to assist themselves in primary health care activities. This is the "Theatre for Development" approach followed by a theatrical group of the Department of Fine and Performing Arts at Chancellor College in Zomba, a constituent body of the University of Malawi. The final part of the section discusses the impact which this approach has had on the general health of the villages (Mwima and Mbela) the group has been working in. Villages on Chisi Island on Lake Chirwa are taken as a contrast area since the "Theatre for Development" team has not as yet started work on this island and it has been found by the Liwonde ADD PHC Unit that the people on the island are reluctant to engage in PHC activities on a self-help community basis.

7.3.1 Health Information and Education in Malawi: An Overview

One of the fundamental principles underlying primary health care as expressed in the Declaration of the International Conference in Alma Ata in 1978 is that health care should be accessible, affordable, and socially relevant. (32) The conference prepared the ground for national government efforts to establish community-based primary health care programmes in many developing countries. Health issues now have a conspicuous place in many national development plans, although actual resource commitment often remains small as in the case of Malawi. (33) Action taken by countries to translate the principle of accessible, affordable and socially relevant health care has so far produced varied results worldwide ranging from dramatic mortality reduction to disappointing impacts.(34) This raises a number of questions: first what are the critical elements of a primary health care strategy necessary for achieving a health impact; and secondly, to what degree can any direct health intervention strategy be effective independent of the general social and economic context in which it operates?

Any primary health care strategy should be characterised by some basic elements, including active community participation; involvement of other development sectors, such as education and agriculture; provision of curative, preventive and health promotion services in a manner socially relevant to the local context; extensive use of paramedical personnel; and use of simple but effective technologies. However, of great importance in primary health care strategy is community participation: if social welfare is to be effectively improved it must involve the people in making their own decisions and taking their own actions.(35) It is interesting to observe that the successful small-scale primary health care experiments, covering a few thousand persons, that have been carried out in a number of less developed countries have been _de facto_ locally managed and they have involved approaches appropriate to the village conditions.

Based on the failures of much-larger-scale primary health care projects imposed from above, it seems reasonable to conclude that the lack of community participation is an important factor in the weak performance of primary health care in many less developed countries. The reason is that there are two formidable barriers:

the first is that many health systems are already locked into an urban biased, hospital-based, high technology system, administratively and politically(36); the second is the frequent lack of political or administrative institutional structures at the community level which can effectively assume this type of responsibility. What usually happens is that the efforts of the government and planning agencies intended for the rural areas in the dissemination of health information, for example, are inadvertently directed towards the already well-to-do urban areas.

In Malawi, primary responsibility of the Health Extension Service of the Ministry of Health is the health education of the public (both rural and urban). This objective is accomplished through books or magazines (e.g. Moyo) written in the national language, Chicheŵa. The magazines contain information on ways to prevent diseases like malaria, bilharzia, diarrhoea, tuberculosis, leprosy and many other common ailments. Education is also effected through regular radio broadcasts of health messages prepared jointly by the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Welfare and Community Services and the Ministry of Agriculture. These broadcasts are in both Chicheŵa. and English - the official government language. Another channel for information diffusion is the use of posters, pamphlets and leaflets which carry selected health subjects. Joint efforts with the Ministries of Agriculture and Community Services (Development) include mobile units equipped with film projectors and puppet shows as shown already.

Although these commendable efforts are said to be directed towards the rural majority (90 percent of Malawi's population is rural), they do not infact reach the rural areas. First, only 30.6 percent of the males and 14.5 percent of the females in Malawi are literate.(37) Furthermore, the majority of the literate population is concentrated in urban areas. This implies that the majority of the population cannot read the health information in the various pamphlets and magazines. Secondly, only 15 percent of the total population has radios and of this only 12 percent of the rural population has access to radios whereas the corresponding figures for urban areas is 46 percent.(38) Clearly the health information broadcast on the radio does not reach the intended target population. Thus, there is a clear need to involve the rural people and their leaders; to motivate them to help themselves. In other words, the diffusion of health information and education should not only come from above but should also include a bottom-up grass root level component as demonstrated by the "Chancellor College Theatre for Development" in motivating people within the areas of Mwima and Mbela in Liwonde ADD PHC Unit as will be reported below.

7.3.2 Liwonde Agricultural Division Primary Health Care Project in Mwinda, Mbela and Chisi Island Areas

Of late Malawi's approach to primary health care has taken a new path. The question among the policy makers is "how is it possible that we have survived up to this moment?". Seminars and workshops have been conducted to examine the role of "traditional" practices, rituals and beliefs concerning birth, care of the new-born, breastfeeding, weaning, child spacing, care of the child as he/she grows up, prevention of accidents, and the prevention and treatment of disease within the "traditional" setting. Ways in which this knowledge was passed from generation to generation has been a topic of discussion at PHC and related workshops within the country (See for instance Malawi PHC Seminar, 1978 and Demographic Unit/Ministry of Health Workshop on Child Spacing, 1986). More than that, it is acknowledged that there were a number of effective ways in which those families who were unable to cope were supported by the community in order to maintain their self-respect.

In other words, there seems to be a re-awakening that throughout history there has been a comprehensive system of care immediately surrounding individuals where they live. This system of care has all along been administered by individuals themselves, by the family, by the community or society around them, and by other concerned individuals. Everyone is involved and the actions of each individual have a bearing on the lives of others. This system of care ensuring the health and survival of people by the community itself, appears to be the best "Primary Health Care" strategy. According to the official definition of Primary Health Care in Malawi as adopted at one of the PHC seminars in 1978 "Primary Health Care is essential health care, preventive and promotive as well as curative, made available to all individuals and families in the community by means acceptable to them, through their full participation and at a cost that the community and the country can afford, and encouraging their development in a spirit of self-reliance and self-determination".(39)

It is based on this definition of community based PHC strategy that Liwonde ADD PHC Unit has been remarkably successful within a very short period since its inception in 1985. Before the Unit was established in Liwonde Township, people along the Shire River had to travel over 20 to 30 kilometres to reach the nearest health centres at Liwonde and Balaka.

Mwima and Mbela are rural trading centres with basically rural characteristics. Each centre has a market that meets once a week. Present at these centres are a few grocery shops and tea-rooms. These centres are in a sense central areas surrounded by rural villages engaged in subsistence agricultural activities and some cash cropping. The main food staples are maize and sorghum and cotton is the main cash crop. Each of the areas has an estimated population of 10,000 people. Mwima is located along the main Liwonde-Mangochi road about 10 kilometres from Liwonde Township and Mbela is about 15 kilometres away from this road. A secondary road which becomes impassable during the rainy season (November to February) passes through Mbela trading centre from Balaka to join the Liwonde-Mangochi road. These areas are within 20 kilometres from the Shire River, the outlet of Lake Malawi located within the Great East African Rift Valley. Temperatures range from a minimum of 60^{o}F during the cold season (May to July) to well over 100^{o}F during the hot and rainy seasons. Rainfall is adequate to allow the growing of both food and cash crops.

On the other hand Chisi Island is on Lake Chirwa (a mostly swampy inland basin lake with no outlet). An estimated population of 3,500 people lives on this island in small fishing village communities. The island is about 15 square kilometres in area and is reachable by small boats and canoes whose capacity is 2 to 6 persons per trip. Twice a day the largest boat (with a capacity of 6) ferries people to and from the island to the main land. There is a full primary school on the island which is in a dilapidated condition. For the nearest health centre people have to travel over 20 kilometres to the General Hospital in Zomba.

All three areas (Mbela, Mwima and Chisi Island are within the boundaries of the Liwonde Agricultural Development Division (ADD) based at Liwonde Township (see Figure 1). The activities of this ADD are partly funded by a German Technical Aid grant. Instead of concentrating on agricultural activities only, the German team sought permission from the Government of Malawi to set up a Primary Health Care Unit at the ADD's headquarters to initially provide essential PHC services to a number of selected areas within the ADD. Clearance was granted sometime in 1985 and activities of the PHC Unit at Liwonde began in 1985. The Unit is run by a medical advisor assisted by a senior clinical officer and a public health nurse. The medical advisor has had extensive experienc in PHC activities in developing countries. The PHC team for the Liwonde ADD together with members of the Chancellor College "Theatre for Development" has mobilised the people of Mwima and Mbela areas to assist themselves in Primary Health Care activities. Their role as a supervisory team in PHC activities in these areas is summarised in Figure 2. The principles guiding the introduction of PHC in these areas as depicted in Figure 2 are as follows:

(i) Peoples concerns and priorities are the main starting point.

(ii) The motivation and participation of the community in its own health care is the only basis on which an enduring and comprehensive programme can be built.

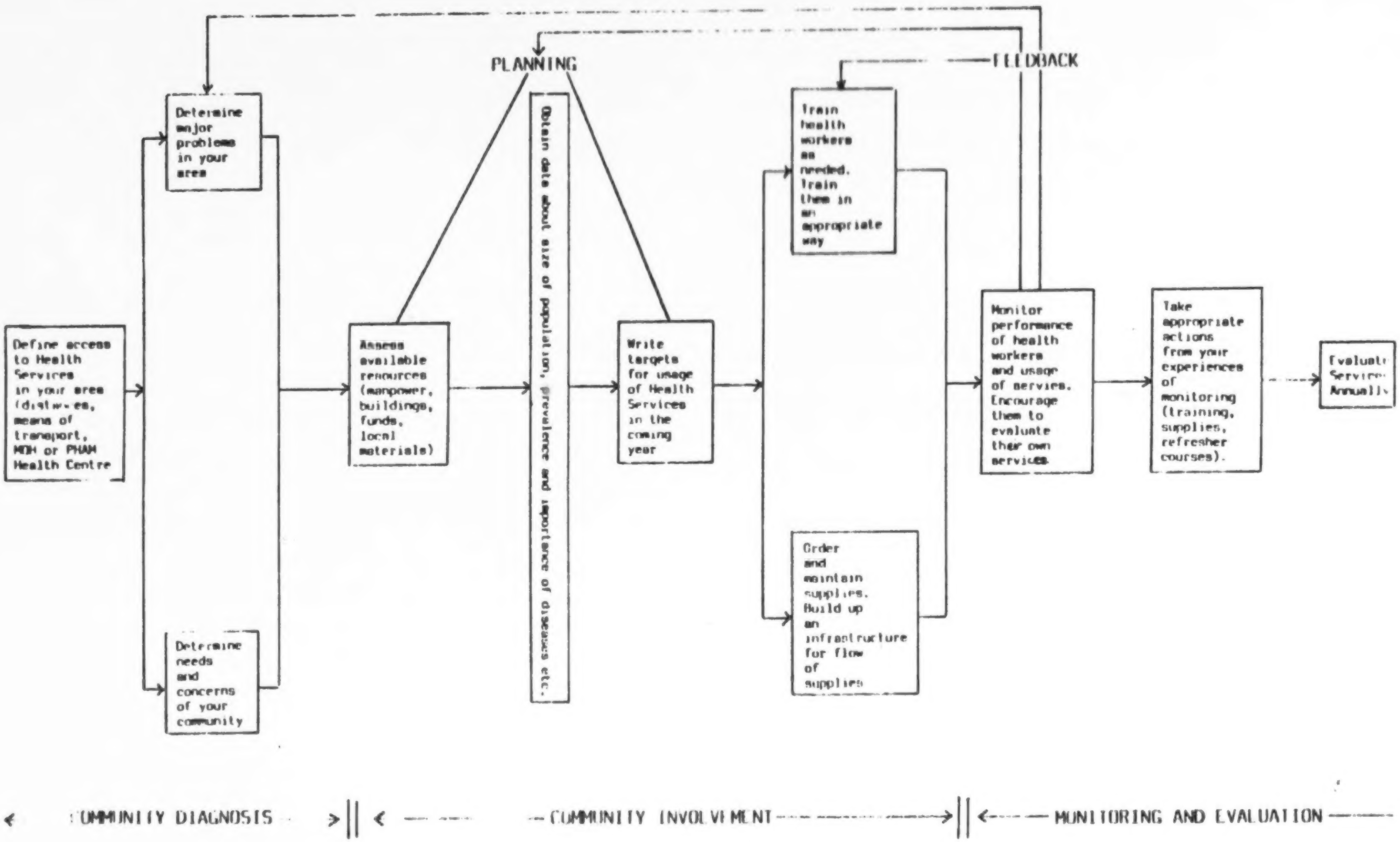
(iii) Primary health care must be linked to the overall national programme but must not be seen as an imposition from above and should include a strong bottom-up grass root level component in the planning process.

(iv) Health is one factor in the total development of the people. Involvement of other development sectors, such as education and agriculture is a must.

The Liwonde ADD PHC Unit has three independent components working hand in hand to promote community well-being. The first and most important is the community itself; the second is the PHC Unit team; and the third component is the "Chancellor College Theatre for Development".

There is no rigid hierarchical arrangement in the provision of PHC services in this rather unique programme. The components can be arranged in a set of three interacting but independent circles (see Figure 3). The functions of each of these are described in the following section on organisational structure and the section of the process of the "Theatre for Development".

FIGURE 2: MAJOR DUTIES OF A SUPERVISOR OF HEALTH WORKERS


PLANNING
FEEDBACK
Define access to Health Services in your area (distances, means of transport, MOH or PHAM Health Centre
Determine major problems in your area
Determine needs and concerns of your community
Assess available resources (manpower, buildings, funds, local materials)
Obtain data about size of population, prevalence and importance of diseases etc.
Write targets for usage of Health Services in the coming year
Train health workers as needed. Train them in an appropriate way
Order and maintain supplies. Build up an infrastructure for flow of supplies
Monitor performance of health workers and usage of servies. Encourage them to evaluate their own services
Take appropriate actions from your experiences of monitoring (training, supplies, refresher courses).
Evaluate Services Annually
COMMUNITY DIAGNOSIS
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Adapted from: WHO Supervisor Skills, A Training Course for Health Area Supervisors

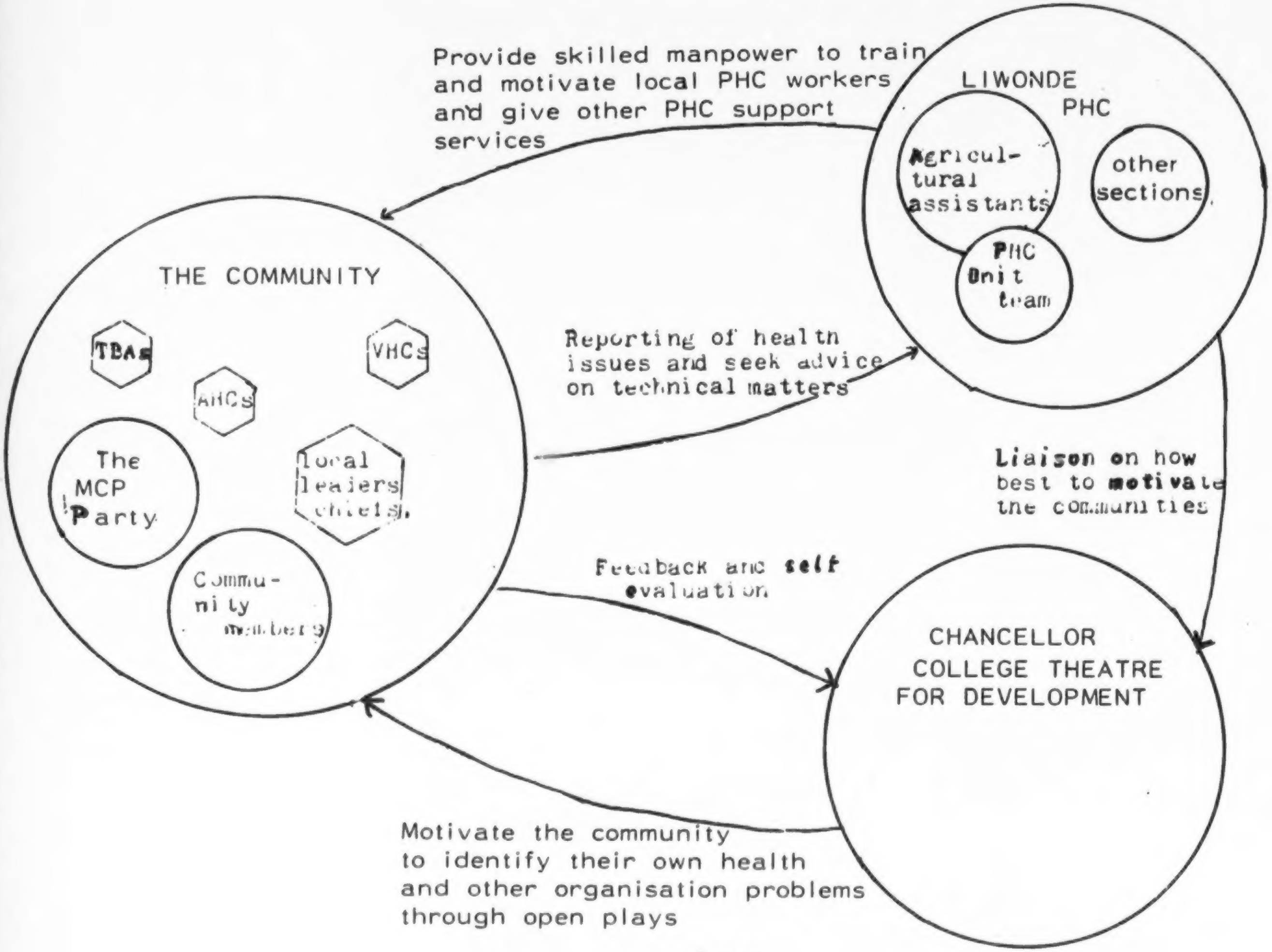
7.3.3 Organisational and Implementation Structure of Liwonde PHC Programme

The Community involvement

As Bennet and Cole-King point out, Malawi has a long tradition of community involvement in development through " self help" projects. (40) Communities are organised according to a combination of traditional and political structures. Traditional chiefs, willage headmen and elders act as the decision making authority in villages. They deal with social and cultural administrative issues such as land distribution and use, land and other disputes and traditional ceremonies. Parallel to this structure, there is the party organisation at district, area and branch level. An area may have 4 to 15 branches. At the area level, both traditional and party authorities are combined in the Area Action Committee, the traditional leader being the chairman. The Area Action Committee may include some Government field workers such as agricultural, community development and health assistants, as well as community elected members. The Area Action Committee is supported by the District Development Committee and it, in turn, supports and coordinates the village or Branch Action Committee. Branch Action Committees may cover one village or up to three or four smaller villages and, like the Area Action Committees, their members are drawn from the party and traditional structures.

Action committees are mainly concerned with specific development projects for generating community resources, mobillising labour and materials, etc. They also act as a channel of communication on

FIGURE 3: ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF LIWONDE ADD PHC UNIT

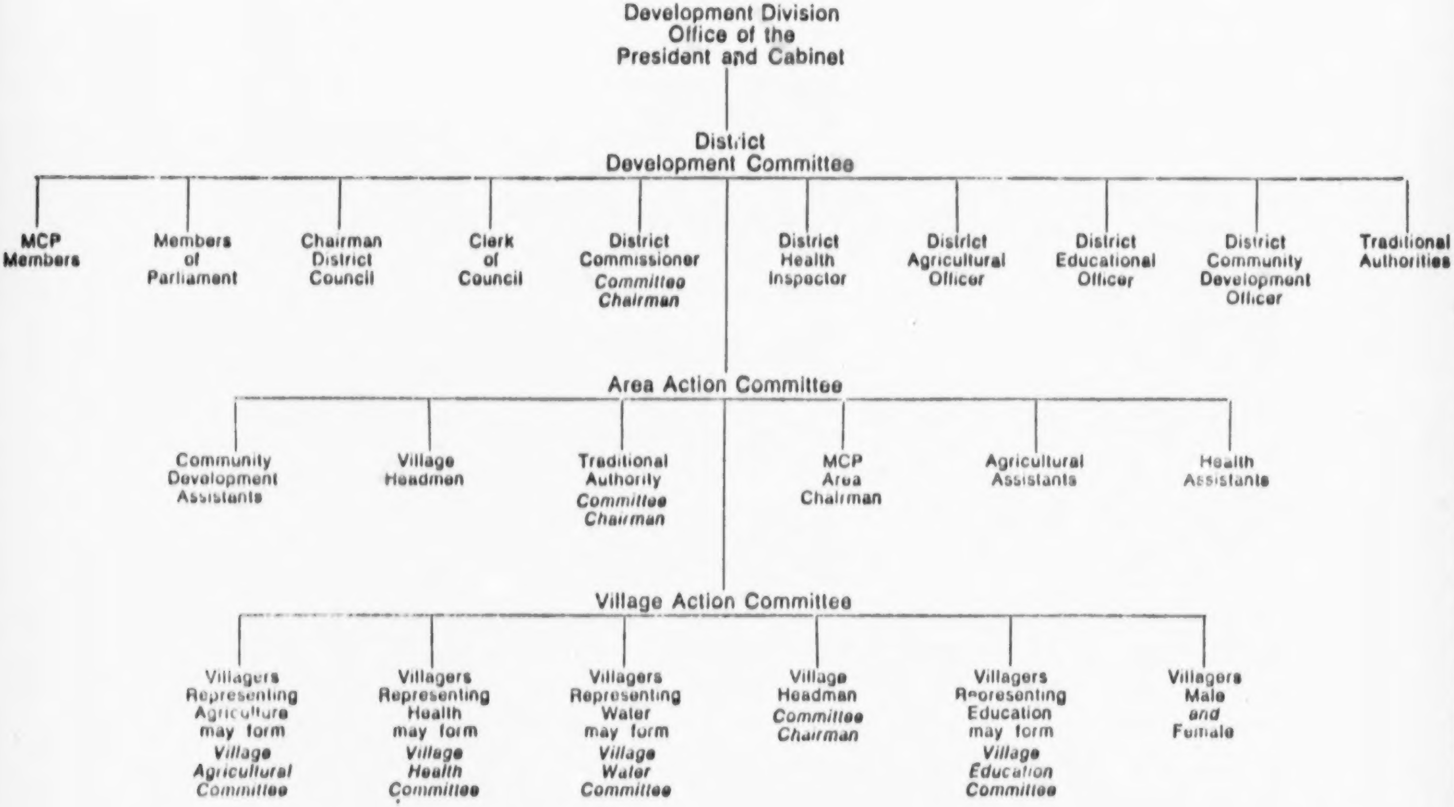

Provide skilled manpower to train and motivate local PHC workers and give other PHC support services
LIWONDE PHC
Agricultural assistants
other sections
PHC Unit team
THE COMMUNITY
TBAs
VHCs
AHCs
The MCP Party
local leaders chiefs
Community members
Reporting of health issues and seek advice on technical matters
Liaison on how best to motivate the communities
Feedback and self evaluation
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT
Motivate the community to identify their own health and other organisation problems through open plays

official, political and developmental matters. There is therefore, in Malawi a well-defined community organisational structure, which links traditional and political systems and which provides opportunities for communication and dialogue with government officials at different levels. This hierarchical arrangement is is given in Figure 4.

The Liwonde PHC Unit utilised this opportunity of an already existing organisational structure in the communities. The Unit advised the people to select their own Village and Area Health committees in Mwima, Mbela and Chisi Island areas at the beginning of the project. Each village health committee has 10 members with a chairman, secretary and trasurer. The members of the health committees are elected by a show of hands at meetings of the whole community attended by the Liwonde PHC Unit team. The Branch Chairman of the Malawi Congress Party and the village Headman are ex-officio members. In these committees at least four of the members are women out of a total of 10 members. In Mbela area there are 12 village health committees and one area health committee; in Mwima there are 10 village health committees and one area health committee; and in Chisi Island there are 5 village health committees and one area health committee.

The functions of health committees are to report on infectious diseases, organise people for health campaigns and health education meetings, and identify health problems in the village. They are also responsible for making sure that the community provides itself and maintains safe water supplies (through protection of wells and

FIGURE 4: DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION CHART AT NATIONAL LEVEL


Development Division Office of the President and Cabinet
District Development Committee
MCP Members
Members of Parliament
Chairman District Council
Clerk of Council
District Commissioner *Committee Chairman*
District Health Inspector
District Agricultural Officer
District Educational Officer
District Community Development Officer
Traditional Authorities
Area Action Committee
Community Development Assistants
Village Headmen
Traditional Authority *Committee Chairman*
MCP Area Chairman
Agricultural Assistants
Health Assistants
Village Action Committee
Villagers Representing Agriculture may form *Village Agricultural Committee*
Villagers Representing Health may form *Village Health Committee*
Villagers Representing Water may form *Village Water Committee*
Village Headman *Committee Chairman*
Villagers Representing Education may form *Village Education Committee*
Villagers Male *and* Female

Source: Malawi, Health for All National Seminar. Lilongwe: Likuni Press and Publishing House, 1978.

safe water supplies etc); promotion of use of health facilities, especially for MCH care and immunisation; the promotion of latrines and refuse disposal and improved housing. The effectiveness of these committees is a reflection of the motivation and training they have received. In each village health committee one member is selected to receive training in health matters. This is done informally by the Liwonde PHC team in the village where the team spends 2 - 3 days or more formally by bringing the selected member(s) to a training centre (e.g. Red Cross Training Centre in Dowa or the Liwonde ADD Headquarters) for one week. These trained members take the role of the community volunteer health workers (locally known as "community doctors") and administer first aid and basic medical care, especially for most prevalent diseases, e.g. diarrhoea, malaria and conjunctivitis. These problems most affect young children. Training in sanitation has also been given to committee members. In short, the initiative for activating health committees, their training and supportive activities has been done by the three-man Liwonde PHC team.

The most unfortunate thing about PHC activities, as experience from elsewhere suggests, is that there is very little involvement of communities in the early planning process of a PHC programme. The tasks and job description of PHC workers are conventionally developed, along with the curriculum, at national level by a committee, without consultations taking place with communities or any community diagnosis of needs and assessment of organisational potential to support and manage health activities at the community level. Usually communities are "told" about the intended programme, and asked to cooperate.

In the Liwonde PHC Unit, the three areas (Mwima, Mbela and Chisi Island) were selected by the Liwonde ADD in conjunction with the Unit. The criteria was the area's level of underdevelopment and by definition, relatively inaccessible as compared with other areas within the ADD. These areas as stated earlier have poor communication and no health centre close to them (especially Chisi Island). Under these conditions, intensive preparation of communities is difficult. Furthermore, community work also requires social and communication skills on the part of activators, motivators or catalysts, where knowledge about health matters has to be combined with sensitivity and intuition. Unfortunately such skills are rare among qualified health personnel where the tendency is to "tell" or "order" rather than to probe, stimulate and draw out ideas, and build on and learn from existing knowledge and expertise.

The function of the "Chancellor College Theatre for Development" team is to fill this vacuum, to probe, stimulate and tease out ideas from the community itself. It is on these ideas that the PHC team started its activities in Mwima and Mbela areas, the "Theatre for Development" team was called upon to go to these areas and make an assessment together with the community about their health problems and needs and what they thought should be done to alleviate their plight. After preliminary discussions with the people, the "Theatre for Development" team found out that in this area especially during the rainy season and prior to harvest the rural population is particularly susceptible to diseases notably cholera and diarrhoea. The latter is particularly serious for the under-five olds. When the people were first contacted by the "Theatre for Development" team the major problem was the poor quality of health of the population and their main desired or perceived need was the establishment of modern advanced medical facilities within the areas. Further discussion, however, revealed that many members of the community were reluctant to use the health centres for a whole variety of socio-cultural reasons. Among other problems identified they had to walk a long distance and spend all day in order to get to such facilities, often to find the medical superintendent out or to find relatively unhelpful personnel as pressure of work often led them to make snap and unhelpful diagnosis. Some of them found such centres both imposing and threatening.

Furthermore, many of the diseases they were suffering from could either be prevented or treated much earlier, much more cheaply and much more efficiently within the local community. Thus the role of "Theatre for Development" was to provide community awareness, to motivate the people to diagnose their own specific problems and to stimulate them to find local solutions to the problems on a self-help basis. This was effectively achieved through the medium of loosely structured plays and sketches in which local community problems were examined and potential local solutions explored. At certain points of the drama the villagers participated in the play by determining in what direction the play should develop. Under such conditions it was frequently discovered that traditional barriers towards local authority could be broken down and issues freely and openly debated democratically. Thus through local entertainment local awareness was heightened and the villagers motivated to help themselves. Unfortunately, the "Theatre for Development" did not carry out these preliminary activities on Chisi Island where the introduction of PHC activities was left to the PHC team alone.

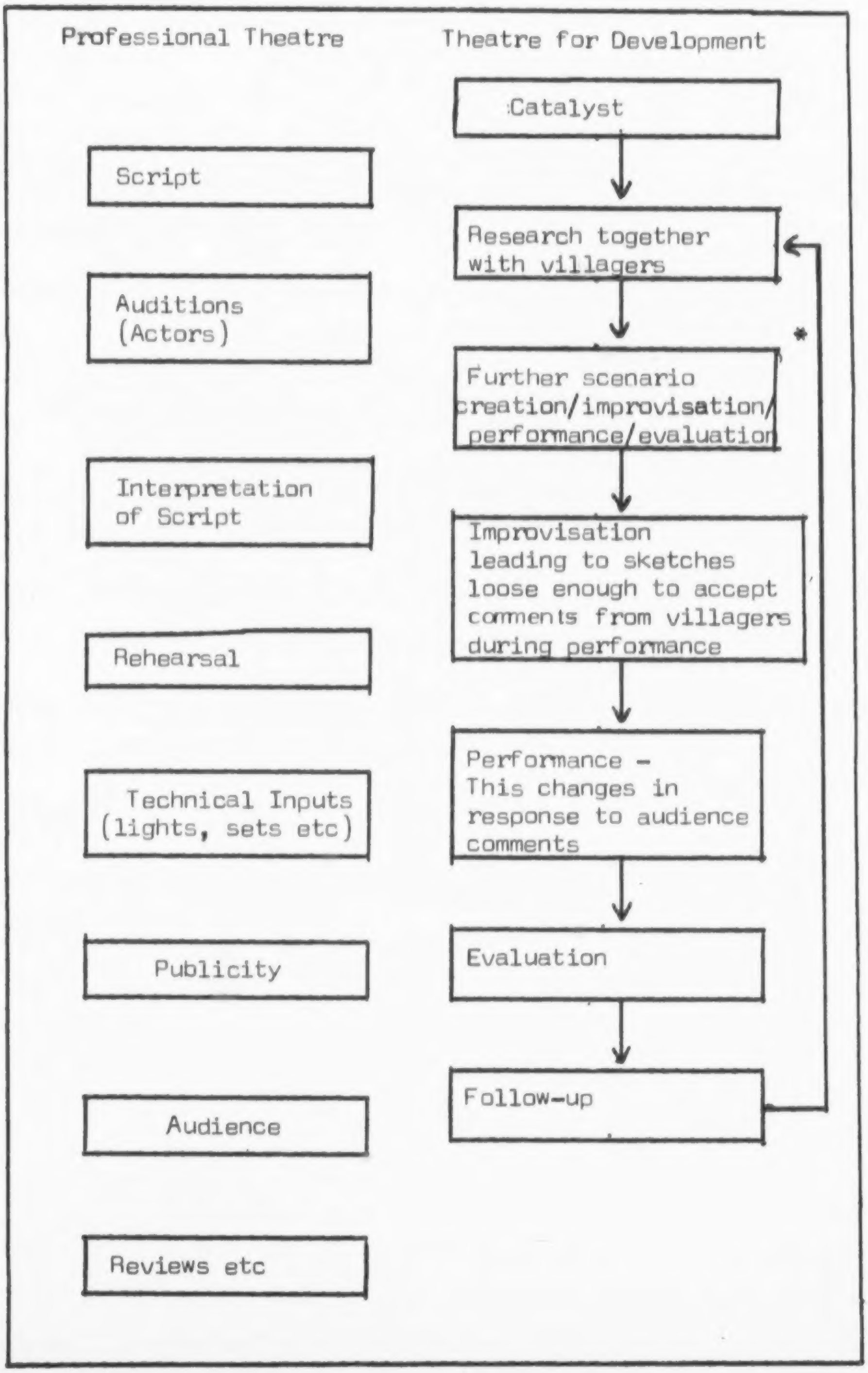
The Role of the Liwonde ADD PHC Unit

The role of the three-man team in Liwonde is to give enough support and supervision to the volunteer village health workers. The team is not there to control people working voluntarily in the community. The team makes sure that they are not perceived as big bosses and they are aware that they are dealing with adults who have been elected by the community.

Thus, the relative success of the committees in their continued promotion of sanitation improvements and communicable disease surveillance is in part due to the untiring and dedicated constant support and help from the Liwonde PHC team. The role of the team is to give support and technical assistance, to act as a backstop for community volunteer health workers, and finally, but most important, to encourage people in the communities to solve their own problems through the self-help concept.

7.3.4 Strategy and Process of "Theatre for Development"

The use of theatre for educational purposes is not strange to Malawi. Women in the country have been known to employ drama during initiation rites when they wish to give knowledge on matters of sex, motherhood, personal hygiene, etc., to novices undergoing initiation upon reaching puberty. The strategy in"Theatre for Development" work is to shift emphasis from the script as happens in conventional "professional" theatre to the process of creating the drama and what happens thereafter. Diagramatically we may present this difference thus:


Professional Theatre
Theatre for Development
Catalyst
Script
Research together with villagers
Auditions (Actors)
*
Further scenario creation/improvisation/ performance/evaluation
Interpretation of Script
Improvisation leading to sketches loose enough to accept comments from villagers during performance
Rehearsal
Performance - This changes in response to audience comments
Technical Inputs (lights, sets etc)
Evaluation
Publicity
Follow-up
Audience
Reviews etc

Whereas the script and the actor dominate in the "professional" theatre, it is the creative process which is dependent on research that is central to "Theatre for Development". This is research carried out by both the theatre practitioners and the villagers amongst whom they work: in other words participatory research. This can go on even after the initial performance. A description of the work carried on at Mwima provides a good picture of what actually goes on in this work.

7.3.5 Theatre for Development at Mwima

The Team

The drama team, made up of drama students and lecturers of drama from the Department of Fine and Performing Arts at Chancellor College, goes out fully aware that they know nothing about Primary Health Care and the situation regarding this issue in the villages. The understanding between the Primary Health Care "experts" and the theatre team is that the latter are to work as an advance party in the villages. They go out to scout on problems that exist in the villages. The approach here is to let the villagers participate in the scouting by providing them with a forum to analyse and articulate the health problems as they understand them.

When the team arrives in the village following advance notice of an impending visit - the team makes it very clear from the outset that they bring nothing to the village. What they come for is to learn from the villagers themselves what and how they see as 'their' problems related to health. Very often these go beyond mere 'health' issues to cover agricultural, economic and social ones (sometimes even political ones).

The report of "Theatre for Development"project at Mwima being given here covers work about a month's duration. During this period 'theatre' work was intermingled with setting up the primary health care machinery in motion. The effect of this was that the two parts of the work were never seen as separated from each other, but as an integrated whole. Theatre work at Mwima is still going on.

FIRST VISIT

Research

1. The Medical Adviser in-charge of the PHC programme in the area explained the purpose of the visit.
2. A member of the theatre for development team took over from the Medical Adviser explaining the 'theatre' aspect as the immediate goal NOT the provision of wanted facilities as the case might be. Here the emphasis was to get the villagers to understand that the visiting team was in the village to'learn' about the village from the villagers themselves. During discussion, the villagers articulated their grievances and requirements. A few comments on their representatives at both local, district and parliament levels were raised. Villagers were told very clearly that information gathered here was going to provide material for dramatisation on issues relevant to health.

A list of 'grievances' by the villagers was noted which included the following things:

- absence of a nurse/clinical officer;
- lack of good , protected water;
- lack of proper market in the place;
- existence of various diseases e.g. diarrhoea, measles, scabies, and anaemia;
- lack of leadership in matters of health;
- hospitals being too far;
- lack of information.

3. After the discussion the team, together with the villagers, went on a tour of the village to see instances of health hazards in the area. This tour was led by the villagers themselves, who explained what they felt was wrong with what they saw. Usually these explanations were defensive and so provided an opportunity for brief discussions which led to balanced and revised understanding of the problems. The discussions were not formal, but were carried on an *ad hoc* basis as people walked about. The first visit ended here with the promise of another visit the following week.

   A most immediate and obvious health problem recognised by both the visiting team and the villagers were the wells that people were drawing water from. They were not taken care of by anyone. They did not have aprons around them. Discussion on this problem led to agreement that it was one which could be remedied quite easily. The villagers agreed that they could have this done if they had cement. The Medical Adviser promised to get them the cement the following week. This work involved clearing the area surrounding the wells and gathering bricks and stones.

4. Back to campus the theatre team together with the PHC team held a plenary session to discuss:

   (a) problems identified and worthy of consideration for dramatisation; these were availability of water and accompanying sanitation, and formation of village health committees and the education of the people on the need for such committees; and

   (b) action to accompany the theatrical presentation.

   Following these discussions the theatre team went on to improvise around the issues raised during the visit and the plenary session back on campus. The idea of the improvisation was to prepare a 'demonstration' sketch which would be further developed on site together with the villagers as both commentators on and participants in the play.

5. Group visits to Mwima were supplemented by longer stays by members of the theatre team. This was to allow the group to get as close as possible to the people, their living habits and their problems. Through these stays further information of grievances was collected i.e. the relationship between the villagers and health personnel at hospital and how the former felt about it was explored to the full; such information was gathered informally in chats with individuals. Later on this was put to good use in trying to get the people to see the need for establishing village health committees.

THE PLAY

The play that was presented to the village was a mixture of drama and open discussion. The procedure here was as follows:

Phase 1:

a) A mother comes to complain to her chief before his elders that she has lost her son in a drowning accident. Further discussion of the accident leads to a decision that the villagers should dig a well from which they can draw water instead of using the river which is not only dangerous, but infested with all sorts of diseases.

b) Having agreed that they should have a well another problem comes up. Where do they cite it? The chief dictates that it should be close to his house, but the elders object and suggest alternative sites which are also objectionable. One is too close to a graveyard and therefore culturally unacceptable. The other one is too far away although at the centre of the shopping area. The chief then opens the debate to other villagers present (the audience that is) to express their views on the subject. At this point the play becomes a real discussion rather than just entertainment. The villagers join in in the debate. They point out that a well close to the chief's house will inevitably be difficult to approach at will as the chief will expect people to treat it as if it was his own personal property. Their choice happens to be somewhere in the middle of the village. In real terms this is in fact where the village's well is located. The discussion moves on to touch on how the village should actually take care of the well once it is dug. What people should not do in order to make it clean. This part, although imaginery is built on the villagers' own observation of what they themselves do at the well e.g. cleaning baby nappies and washing clothes etc. close to the well instead of away from it. Most articulate in this part of the discussion/drama are women for they are more knowledgeable about usage of wells than men. Several problems related to the question of water are brought out.

c) At this point the theatre group opens up the participation in the dramatisation to the villagers by encouraging the latter to act in a repeat of the sketch just presented, but incorporating ideas and arguments that came along as it was first performed. In this way more arguments, discussion on issues relevant to the question of the well and its maintenance evolve.

d) After the village's dramatisation, a summing up session is gone into. All this is done by the theatre team and the villagers. The PHC team just watch as a passive audience; if ever they participate in this it is either as actors or audience NOT as experts.

Phase 2

a) Building on complaints about the way hospital personnel treat the sick a sketch was developed whose thrust was to get the villagers to find alternatives to the hospital when faced with simple ailments. This led to a discussion of selecting among themselves people who might take care of their immediate health needs (health committees).

b) Having developed this part of the sketch the whole play was taken to the market square where a larger audience was in attendance. The play here substituted details relevant to the village set-up by those referring to the market place. Instead of just wells, the question of digging garbage trenches and general cleanliness of the market were incorporated into the drama. The performance once again was a mixture of acting and discussion of issues raised. By the end of the performances sufficient ground had been covered to prepare the people to select their village health and market committees. This latter part was left in the hands of the PHC team.

The "Theatre for Development Approach" may be summed thus:-

a) Consultation with PHC field workers; discussion rather than simple acceptance of issues raised by health people. The idea here is to acquaint the theatre practitioner with PHC needs.

b) Visiting the village, investigating relevant issues through participation in village life. Out of consultation and discussion with PHC workers and villagers a sketch is improvised and taken to the village. The purpose of this visit is to first of all establish the theatre for development idea and to extend discussion of the problems of PHC (to see the villagers' point of view).

c) Scenario preparation using findings of the first meeting in the village i.e. (b) and rehearsals.

d) Presentation of play in the village. The presentation style here emphasizes an open-ended approach to allow for discussion as performance is going on. A result of this is frank participation between health workers, villagers and theatre people in the discussions that arise out of ongoing performance.

e) The PHC team comes in with technical details per issues pertinent to the occasion.

f) Sometimes theatre has to come back to help (e) in terms of dealing with the people's reaction to what the PHC team comes up with.

7.3.6 Impact of Liwonde ADD PHC in Mwina, Mbela and Chisi Islands

The use of the "Theatre for Development" as the main catalyst, and the use of area and village health committees has proved to be effective especially in Mwima and Mbela areas. In Malawi, as elsewhere in developing countries, the priority health problems exist in young children and one of the major objectives of PHC programmes is to reduce high infant mortality rates. From experience of PHC elsewhere in the world it has been found that the most effective PHC programmes which influence mortality are those where the main activities carried out are: nutritional surveillance, particularly of 0-4 year age group who are not brought to child clinics, promotion of nutrition in the homes, ante-natal screening, distribution of iron and folate to pregnant mothers, tetanus immunization, management of diarrhoea in children, immunization especially against measles, and prophylaxis and easily available treatment especially for the vulnerable under-fives and pregnant women. Interestingly, health problems of mothers and children were identified as some of the priorities by the communities at the problem identification stage in Mbela and Mwima. The implication for this has been that women have been involved out of necessity as members of the health committees (on average 5 out of 10 members are females). Actually in Mbela the village health committee consists of 9 women and one man.

At the beginning of the PHC programme in these areas the following were the major health problems identified by the communities themselves. The most common conditions in the areas in 1985:

(i) Malaria.
(ii) Diarrhoeal diseases including severe diarrhoea and cholera,
(iii) Inflamatory diseases of the eye (Conjunctivities)
(iv) Scabies,
(v) Symptoms referrable to respiratory system,
(vii) Hookworm and other helminthiases,
(viii) Bilharzia.

Most common conditions in children 0 - 4 years at the beginning of programme in 1985:

(i) Malaria,
(ii) Symptoms referable to respiratory system,
(iii) Diarrhoeal diseases,
(iv) Condition of the skin (scabies),
(v) Diseases referable to abdomen and gastro-intestinal tract,

vi) Traumatic conditions,

vii) Measles,

viii) Deficiency (nutritional) diseases.

Estimates of infant mortality rates according to surveys carried out in the areas at the beginning of the programme ranged from 170 to 200 deaths per 1,000 live births. Well over 40 percent of the infants were underweight. On Chisi Island almost all the children aged 4 - 13 were infected with bilharzia. Less than ten percent of the households had a pit latrine. Wells and springs supplying drinking water were generally unprotected and in a deplorable condition. Deaths from severe diarrhoea and cholera were not uncommon in these areas. In short, the health and general living conditions in these areas were utterly sub-standard and unacceptable.

However, since the introduction of the PHC programme in Mbela and Mwima areas, there have been remarkable strides and gains. The village health committees motivated by the "Theatre for Development" performances, have been very active and membership of the committees has remained intact with just a couple of drop outs. On the other hand the people of Chisi Island have not been motivated and fully mobilised. The main reason appears to be that the PHC team went in without popular theatre to motivate the people first. The village health committees on the island are mostly inactive and unconcerned about the communities' precarious health conditions. The popular "Theatre for Development" is currently preparing to go and motivate the people of Chisi Island, but it may be already too late. The success and impact of the programme can be clearly seen in the detailed data that is collected by members of the village health committees and forwarded to the PHC Unit office at the Liwonde Unit office at the Liwonde ADD main office as monthly returns.

Elaborate information on the process and progress of community involvement is collected at community level. The number of village health committees functioning, names of individual members, and indicators of activities (how often are meetings held, seminars, projects undertaken etc), how many PHC workers trained in what topics etc. are among the numerous indicators that are well documented every month at the PHC Unit office. The PHC volunteer workers within the community keep a specially designed register from which the PHC Unit supervisory team is able to extract relevant information. In addition, health committees have been encouraged to identify their own needs for information to monitor their own programmes. One of the committee members is given the duty of information collecting. The basic pieces of health information collected monthly include the number of deaths occuring in young children and adults each month, the number of cases of diarrhoea each month, the number of families with latrines, the number of families using safe and unsafe water sources, the community's satisfaction with the volunteer PHC workers, etc. Furthermore, volunteer PHC workers record additional information in their registers (e.g. cases treated and referrals, monthly nutritional and weight surveillance for children). Table 1 shows one of the detailed registers specially designed for the community PHC information collector. Data for most of the tables presented below was compiled from these registers.

AREA .... TABLE 1: DISTRICT ....

KHADI YA BUNGWE LA ZAUMOYO (HEALTH REGISTER)

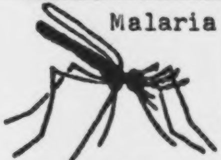
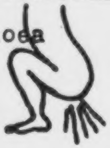
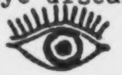
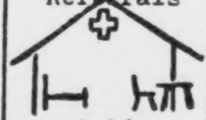
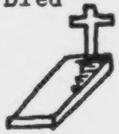
Dzina la mudzi (Village)................. mwezi (month)...... chaka (Year).......

Dzina la kumpando wa zaumoyo (VHC Chairman's Name)..............................

nambala ya nyumba (Number of Houses).... nambala ya zimbudzi (Number of Pit Latrines)........

nambala ya ana amene anabadwa mwezi uno (Number of children born during month)............. ...

ODWALA AMENE ANAANDIRA MANKHWALA KAPENA ANAMWALIRA (PATIENTS TREATED OR DIED DURING MONTH)

AGE	Malaria  malungo	Diarrhoea  kutsegula mimba	Eye diseases  matenda a maso	Referrals  otumizidwa kuchipatala	Died  omwalira	MATENDA ENA (Other diseases, specify). See below
ana a zaka 0-4 Aged 0-4						
ana a zaka kupitilira 4 Aged > 4 years						
akuru Adults						

matenda ena (chikuku, kulera, likodzo, matenda a pakhungu (other diseases: whooping cough, underweight, bilharzia, scabies, etc.)

munaenderedwa liti komalizira (When was your village last visited by PHC team?)

Source: Liwonde ADD PHC Unit.

In general the impact of the programme on the health and living conditions of the people within the three areas has been in three main spheres. These are sanitation and water, maternal care, and provision of basic medications. The health committees are providing effective supervision of environmental sanitation, and promoting sanitation and water improvement projects. The communities in Mbela and Mwima have been taught appropriate skills in hand-dug wells and latrine construction. Today, the villages in Mbela and Mwima areas have over 40 protected shallow wells about 4 to 7 feet in depth. Concrete curtains have been constructed around the wells so that surface water should flow away instead of lying stagnant around the well and potentially polluting the water supply. Mwima has a village community workshop/factory for producing concrete slabs (san-platforms) for latrines. The materials and technical advice are provided by the PHC team from Liwonde. Before the arrival of the PHC team in 1985 only ten percent of the houses had pit latrines. A few months later, in June 1986 49 percent of the households in Mbela and 51 percent in Mwima had constructed pit latrines to the recommended standards. In February 1987, about 71 percent of the families in Mbela and 81 percent of families in Mwima had decent pit latrines (see Table 2). The people have been made aware about the need for latrines to promote sanitation. A few people we interviewed in Mbela area pointed out a number of advantages for building latrines. Among them were self-respect for the individual and family and prevention of diseases to attain or promote better health.

On the other hand people on Chisi Island who have not as yet been motivated by popular theatre do not see the need for latrines (only 26 percent of the households have built latrines so far (Table 3). The wells and springs supplying drinking water on the island are still in wretched conditions. There are plans by the Liwonde PHC Unit to assist the people on the island to build 45 shallow wells and 1,000 decent pit latrines within 24 months under the self-help concept. The PHC Unit is to provide technical personnel to organise the production of san-platforms and concrete rings and to supervise construction of shallow wells and pit latrines according to the recommended standards. The Unit will provide all necessary tools, 5 water hand pumps including fittings and a repair kit and building materials. The local community will be expected to provide labour and local materials for construction of a temporary workshop/ factory for the construction of concrete rings for the shallow wells and the san-platforms. Estimated cost of the project is about US$20,000.00 to be provided by organisations like UNDP, World Bank and German Technical Aid. One piece of advice to the Liwonde PHC Unit is that the "Theatre for Development" should be called in on Chisi Island to mobilise and motivate the people to diagnose their own problems and assist themselves in these endeavours as has happened in Mbela and Mwima areas.

As far as maternal care is concerned, the programme has selected TBAs who are respected by the community. These are among the village health committee members and are known as the "community mid-wives". They are being trained to provide basic ante-natal care including iron

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF LATRINES IN MBELA AREA

Village	Number of houses	Number of latrines			
		June 1986		February 1987	
		No.	%	No.	%
Mtira	262	107	41	123	47
Said-Son	58	32	55	52	90
Chipole	168	65	39	75	45
Kalambo	62	44	71	48	77
Mbela	150	106	71	136	91
Pyoli	320	95	30	253	79
Makuta	319	203	64	263	82
Herbet	118	54	46	108	91
Abudu	239	133	56	150	63
Nsanja	139	50	36	62	45
Kabota	107	37	35	80	75
Total	1,906	926	49	1350	71

Estimated population for Mbela area: 9,530.

Source: Liwonde ADD Primary Health Care Unit, Monthly Returns.

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF LATRINES ON CHISI ISLAND

Village	Number of houses	Number of Latrines			
		June 1986		February 1987	
		No.	%	No.	%
Maluwa	170	13	8	34	20
Tchuka	45	8	18	15	33
Chilima	30	10	33	12	40
Kotamu	159	43	27	42	26
Nkumbira	152	23	15	30	20
Chigwere	83	28	33	26	31
Khumali	42	4	9	17	40
Total	681	129	19	176	26

Estimated total population on island: 3,405.

Source: Liwonde ADD Primary Health Care Unit, Monthly Returns.

supplementation, malaria treatment and high risk screening. Community "doctors" have been selected and trained to diagnose common conditions and administer basic medications such as chloroquine, aspirin, eye ointment, scabies ointment etc. Thus, the community "doctors" in collaboration with the TBA's take up the tasks of nutritional and health surveillance of children (including which children require immunization for the next mobile PHC team visit, or to encourage mothers to go to the under-five clinic on appropriate days), the distribution of chloroquine, first aid and treatment of minor ailments, the management of diarrhoea in children, and treatment of malaria and selected other common conditions in children and adults. They also educate families and community groups on the prevention of these conditions. The efforts of these dedicated, community based (unpaid volunteer) PHC workers have been amply rewarded.

As shown in Table 4, the cholera situation during 1985 and 1986 has improved drammatically. In 1986 incidences of severe diarrhoeas were very low as compared to incidences occuring during the same period in 1985. This situation also compares favourably well to that of 1985

TABLE 4: REPORTED CASES OF CHOLERA AND SEVERE DIARRHOEA INCIDENCES IN LIWONDE AREA

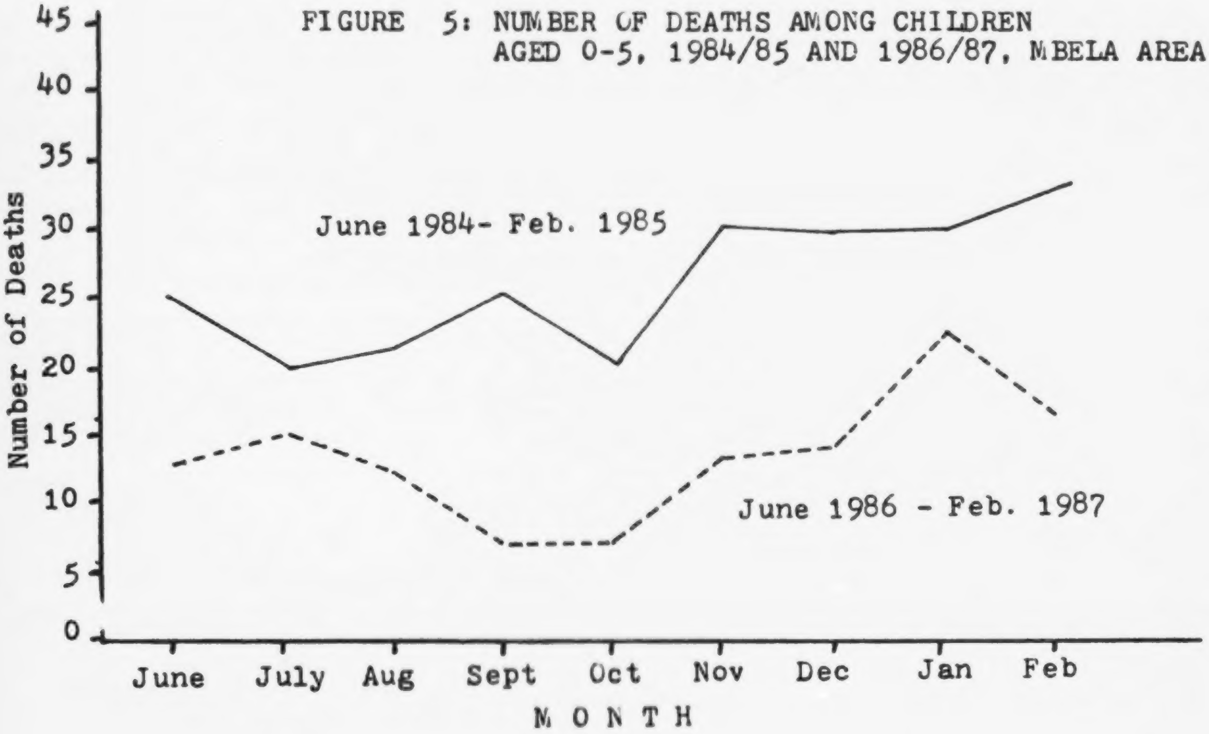
	1985			1986		
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Total No. of Cases	92	116	155	46	29	15
Total No. of Deaths	2	0	1	0	0	0
Total No. of Positives	16	15	8	1	0	0

Source: Liwonde ADD Primary Health Care Unit, Cholera Quarterly Returns October - December, 1986.

when numbers of cases, deaths, and positives were high as can be seen in Table 4. It is our understanding that this reduction in cholera incidence has come about because of the PHC activities of the Liwonde PHC Unit. In the areas under study there has been a favourable response on sanitary improvement through health education by the communities themselves. Pit latrines have been constructed and are being used. Water purification and care by application of bleaching (chlorination) powder is in great use. Furthermore, immediate reporting of suspected cholera and severe diarrhoea to health institutions by the community and improved water supplies by provision of sanitary structures at wells/springs have been vital to the improved situation. All this is undeniably due to the efforts of the Liwonde ADD PHC team and the "Theatre for Development" to motivate the villagers in health activities.

Further evidence is shown in Figure 5 and Table 5. Figure 5 shows that there has been a significant reduction in monthly infant and child mortality deaths caused by diarrhoeal diseases. In Table 5 for instance one would expect figures of diarrhoea incidence to be higher in February than in June. February is the peak month for the rainy season when diarrhoea and cholera are rampant, June is the mid cold season month, when the conditions are healthy and people have plenty of food to eat since it is soon after harvest. Yet the incidence figures for February, 1987 are generally lower than those of June, 1986. The number of infant deaths is almost comparable, 13 for June 1986 and 17 for February 1987. The number of adult deaths is much lower for 1987 than for 1986 (i.e. 1 death in February 1986 compared to 8 deaths for June, 1986). The current estimated infant mortality rate for Mbela and Mwima areas is 126 compared to 180 and above before the PHC project in this area. These are a few examples of data that is available in the Liwonde PHC Unit office for Mwima and Mbela areas to illustrate the positive impact this unique programme has brought about in the health conditions of the people. Figures for Chisi Island, where the approach has been slightly different from that used in Mbela and Mwima areas, show that the situation is not favourable. The morale of the people on the Island is low and they are not concerned about their plight.

FIGURE 5: NUMBER OF DEATHS AMONG CHILDREN AGED 0-5, 1984/85 AND 1986/87, MBELA AREA



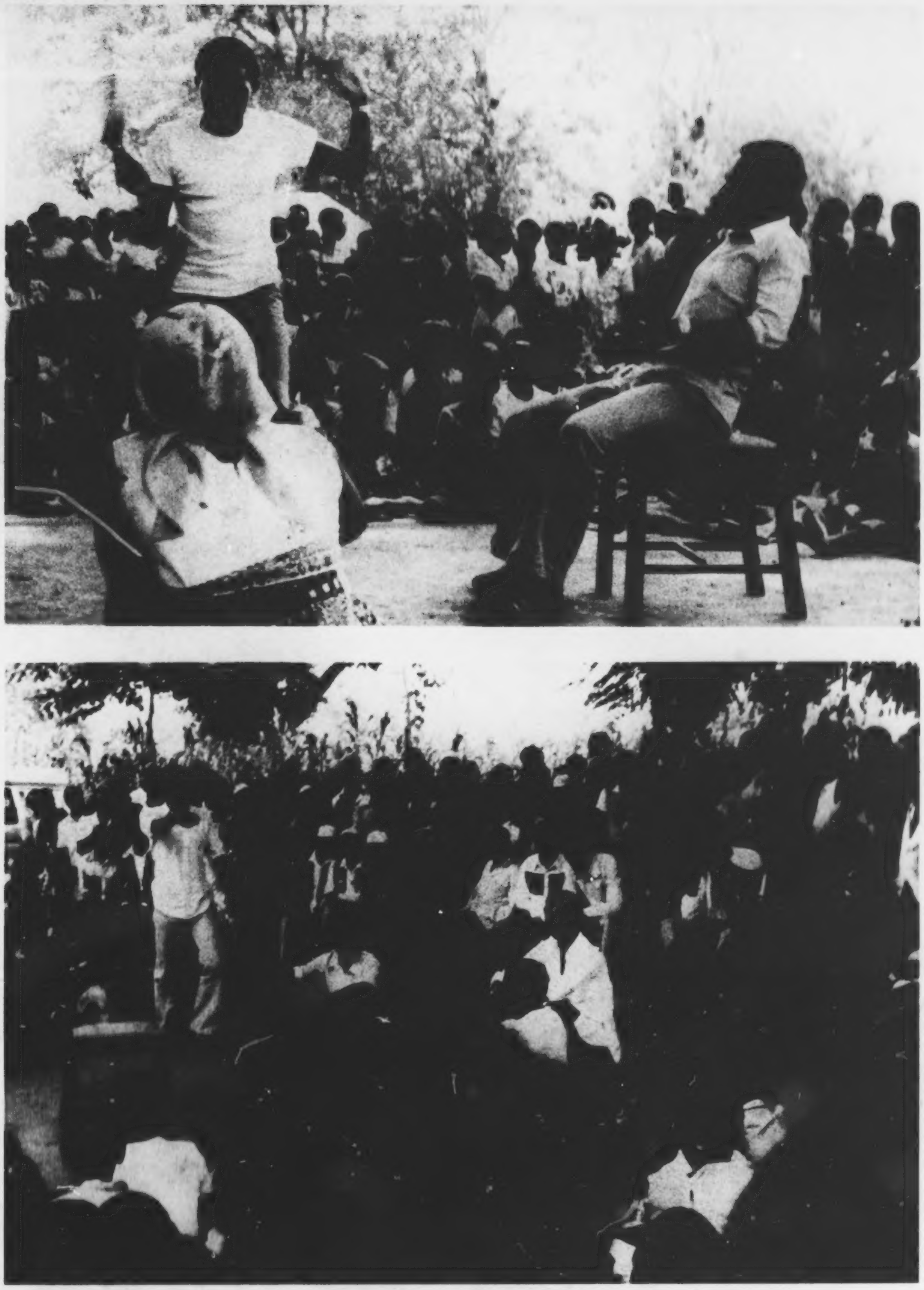
Monthly average deaths in 1986/87: 13
Monthly average deaths in 1984/85: 31

Sources: Liwonde ADD PHC Unit and Liwonde District Hospital Records.

TABLE 5: INCIDENCE OF DIARRHOEA IN CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN MBELA AREA

	June 1986				February 1987			
VILLAGE	No. of Cases		No. of Deaths		No. of Cases		No. of Deaths	
	0 - 5	Adults	0 - 5	Adults	0 - 5	Adults	0 - 5	Adults
Mtira	21	0	1	0	68	52	3	0
Said-Son	0	0	0	0	9	4	5	0
Chipole	11	0	1	1	38	5	1	1
Kalambo	111	76	1	1	60	43	0	0
Mbela	7	7	3	2	5	5	1	0
Pyoli	33	2	0	0	43	11	1	0
Makuta	93	64	1	4	8	7	0	0
Herbert	13	1	2	0	7	8	0	0
Abudu	30	16	4	0	19	15	2	0
Msanja	38	34	0	0	48	20	4	0
Kabota	10	3	0	0	18	10	0	0
TOTAL	367	203	13	8	323	180	17	1

Source: Liwonde ADD PHC Unit, Monthly Returns.



The Theatre Team of the Department of Fine and Performing Arts, Chancellor College, University of Malawi, in action together with villagers. Quarrelling before the chief.

Tradition for development: music, dance and story-telling

7.3.7 Diffusion of Information and Education for Health in Liwonde ADD

It is hoped that, by concentrating the PHC activities in a number of selected areas, these areas will serve as centres of information diffusion to their surrounding neighbours where the programme has not been initiated. The model for diffusion is through village contact. Indeed this approach is yielding the desired results. Surrounding villages and areas are requesting the PHC team and popular theatre to start PHC activities in their areas if possible and that they are ready to help themselves. This is true of the villages immediately outside Mbela and Mwima areas. Villagers from surrounding areas are coming to Mwima and Mbela to observe and receive basic first aid care and treatment from the "community doctors". Data obtained from the files at the PHC Unit in Liwonde show that in Mbela area the 11 village health committees are catering for 23 other extra villages (see Table 6).

The good news about the success of this PHC project has not been restricted to the surrounding villages only. In February 1987, a team of PHC workers from Zimbabwe visited the project to see if it can be replicated in their country as well.

TABLE 6: EXTRA VILLAGES BEING SERVED BY MBELA VILLAGE HEALTH COMMITTEES

Village health Community	No. of own village community	No. of other village communities being served
Mtira	1	5
Said-Son	1	0
Chipole	1	0
Kalambo	1	3
Mbela	1	0
Pyoli	1	7
Makuta	1	4
Herbert	1	2
Abudu	1	0
Nsanja	1	3
Kabota	1	0
TOTAL	11	23

Source: Liwonde ADD PHC Unit, Monthly Returns

Furthermore, the messages and form of communication support required is determined locally but is prepared and transmitted centrally. Flip charts, pamphlets and seminars especially on supervision of PHC are some of the strategies employed by Liwonde PHC Unit to communicate information effectively to the village health committees. Use of folk media and popular theatre is directed at the general population and groups such as school children, women and youth. The strategy has proved to be effective and useful. Let us now turn to Zambian experiences.

Chapter Eight

8. THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN ZAMBIA

8.1. CHIKWAKWA THEATRE AND DEVELOPMENT IN ZAMBIA

The Chikwakwa Theatre of the University of Zambia has always insisted on the idea of taking theatre to the people. Its members have done this by either touring a repertoire of plays considered relevant to the needs of the masses or conducting drama workshops in the rural areas of Zambia in the hope that the people can evolve their own theatre thereof.

During its early tours Chikwakwa Theatre concentrated on presenting already prepared packages of drama to their 'visited' audiences. But with time, and very rapidly indeed, this idea grew to include presentations which were worked out by the theatre company together with local volunteers from the places toured. As this was happening the tours changed in format to become drama workshops. These workshops have matured into a technique of play creation which is unique in African theatre experience. This can best be shown through a study of the play Matteo Sakala(1) which is a direct result of this type of work. But first of all let us look at the drama workshops.

8.1.1 Drama workshop tours: their history and development in Zambia

Michael Etherton talking of theatrical activity in Zambia says that:

> what he found interesting in the country was the widespread existence of touring companies producing plays among the people - frequently political, and entirely self-contained, without any whites around at all - in fact, almost consciously kept a secret from them.(2)

The idea of touring theatrical events in Zambia (as indeed in other parts of Africa) is not a foreign one. From time immemorial traditional performers have moved from village to village singing and presenting dances to groups of both young and old people in the village square. The concept of 'taking theatre to the people' is therefore a misconstrued one. It suggests the existence of a vacuum within the rural communities. What perhaps should be talked about is the idea of 'sharing theatre with the people'. This gives some allowance for the possibility of learning from each other as theatre practitioners from university complexes mingle with villagers or suburban populations. The experiences of early Chikwakwa Theatre tours confirm this possibility. Whilst they set out to

> persist with their efforts to take meaningful theatre to the people and encourage them to persist with the creation of meaningful forms of imaginative and dramatic expression in their own communities,(3)

actual experience showed them that they too had a good deal to learn from the people they visited. By 1971 Chikwakwa Theatre enthusiasts had already made three workshops in rural areas. (4) This however was by no means the first time drama workshops were being conducted in the country. Records from colonial days show that even during this period some bodies in the country tried to conduct drama workshops amongst Africans.

Although on the whole theatre activities in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) were developing along racial lines, the intentions of the government to 'improve' the African sometimes ran contrary to the wishes of segregationist or racist theatre minds. The creation of the Northern Rhodesia Youth Council and its involvement in youth recreational activities was one such contradiction.

The Northern Rhodesia Youth Council was an offshoot of the Northern Rhodesia Council for Social Services. It embraced all youth organisations of all races. Whilst it was asked to deal with a growing rate of delinquency amongst European children, (5)

> amongst Africans, with about 40,000 children in towns along the lines of rail who (had) missed schooling because they (were) now too old to benefit from the expansion of education in recent years, the problem (was) more in the sphere of informal education for citizenship. (6)

Establishing of drama and choir groups was considered one method of providing this 'informal education'. An annual festival was also organized by the same organisation at which prizes were awarded for the best presentations. This was the Annual Choir and Drama Festival.

In 1960 it was reported that its

> preliminaries on the Copperbelt were attended by as many as 3.000 people. At the finals in July, H.E. the Governor, Sir Evelyn Hone, opened the proceedings and Lady Hone presented the prizes. The standard reached by these clubs in presenting their own plays or training their own choirs was gratifyingly high and justifyied the great deal of work that had been put into it. (7)

Such quality was achieved through the workshops that the Council organized for African youth leaders. Chifunyise says that:

> Among other projects by the Northern Rhodesia Youth Council were the drama workshops. The first drama workshop was held in Lusaka at the Waddington Center in March 1960, as a way of preparing the choir and drama groups for that year's festival at Mulungushi. The main emphasis in this drama workshop was to coach club leaders and their members various aspects of acting, directing and overall club management. (8)

The festivals launched by this organisation covered the period between 1958 and 1963. The efforts of the Northern Rhodesia Youth Council produced phenomenal results in the field of theatre. In 1963 the Department of Social Welfare reported that the festival had become a national event. Ninety-nine clubs took part in that year's festival. Dr. Kenneth Kaunda (now President of Zambia) presented trophies on the occasion. The effectiveness of the Youth Council thus managed to make inroads into a new political set up as its work spilled into the independence era. With the coming of independence the council dropped the name Northern Rhodesia and became Zambia Youth Council in line with the change that had happened to its parent organisation (which had become Zambia Council for Social Welfare).

These changes were not in names only. The financial status of the organisation deteriorated:

> The Zambia Council for Social Services folded up on 31st December, 1968, for financial reasons, and the Government transferred the functions of the Council to (the) Department of Social Welfare (in the Ministry of Labour and Social Services). (9)

This inevitably affected the work of the Zambia Youth Council. As financial problems harassed the parent organisation, the youth wing could not find its base anymore. But as Chifunyise says, the efforts to develop theatre amongst the youth as a means of curbing delinquency or introducing informal education paid off in spite of the collapse of the Zambia Youth Council:

> The drama workshop projects, although only two were held by the Northern Rhodesia Youth Council, helped many club leaders in their organisation of drama clubs and the production of good plays and club programs.(10)

These club leaders and other members of the Youth Council, and its Youth Choir/Drama Festival became a major force in Zambia's cultural revolution soon after independence in 1964, as they joined various organisations in the country.

It should be clear now that the idea of conducting drama workshops with the intention of both developing theatre skills as well as informal education amongst participants did not start with the creation of the University of Zambia nor indeed with the work of Michael Etherton and his brainchild, Chikwakwa Theatre. What these have done is to give more concrete shape to the ideas behind such work than any other people who might have been doing this sort of work before.

8.1.2 Chikwakwa Theatre rural drama workshops

Although the name Chikwakwa Theatre did not come up until 1969 it can be safely assumed that all the work done in theatre at the University of Zambia hitherto led to the creation of Chikwakwa. Therefore, such work should be seen as part and parcel of Chikwakwa Theatre enterprises. After all it was the same people who participated in such work as well as the Chikwakwa Theatre, namely: students and staff of the University of Zambia.

When the first Chikwakwa Review appeared in 1971 it recorded a total of three drama workshops as having been conducted since 1969. Unfortunately it did not provide reports on the first two held at Kasama (1969) and Chipata (1970). If any information is sought regarding these primal experiments, it must be sought elsewhere. (11) These first experiments are important for a clear understanding of the way policies regarding rural drama workshops came up.

Kasama Workshop 1969

Tom Baldwin talks of a workshop held at Kasama in the Northern Province of Zambia as:

> an experiment by the University of Zambia where two plays were rehearsed and performed in Kasama, Northern Province. The aim (of the experiment being) to show students and Zambians interested in staging plays how simple productions can be achieved without the aid of a conventional stage, complex lighting and scenic facilities. (12)

Several things happened at this workshop which indicated the way future work was to follow. First and foremost perhaps was the realization by the organizers of such workshops that the whole experience was going to be and had to be a two-way process. Whilst they had set out to 'teach' they were also going to be taught something themselves. The choice of plays and the way of performing were all going to change as a result of this first encounter with villagers.

Participants to this experiment were drawn from members of the University of Zambia and the local community: (13)

> The university decided to put on two simple plays in the Zambian bush, to be rehearsed and performed within four days to show students and local inhabitants alike how basic productions could be achieved using only the minimum of materials .... My wife was to produce one play, myself the other. (14)

The thrust of this workshop was towards 'simplistic' drama based on simple stories or plays. This was so because it was believed that :

> There are few plays in English which are readily performable without some adaptation into Zambian terms. Students will be all too willing to act in Shakespeare or Soyinka, but in most cases a more lasting knowledge and valuable experience will be gained by starting with something more manageable and less demanding.(15)

In line with such thoughts specially prepared scripts were presented.

These were a rendering of The Pardoner's Tale by Chaucer and a dramatization of a traditional tale, The Talking Drum. Saying that the group decided to work in the 'bush' is some form of romanticizing. The venue of this particular workshop was not so rural. Kasama is a district in its own right. Though not as big as Lusaka or Kitwe, it has its own small infra-structure made up of shops, a few government offices and some public facilities.

Because of the straight-forwardness of the group's intentions organization of the workshop simply followed the division of labour existent in a typical western theatre enterprise, namely; director, stage manager, musician, dance choreographer etc. And so as soon as bodies were identified, work proceeded along such lines with the Baldwins directing one play a piece. It is important to stress that the whole workshop was geared towards one-way traffic, that is it was meant to be for the benefit of the rural communities who 'knew next to nothing' about drama and had nothing to give in return. However working in this sort of atmosphere brought up problems hitherto unanticipated. Whilst the stage management team went out

> scrounging the countryside for wood and trying to borrow the necessary furniture from local people (16)

the problem of language came up. The plays had been conceived in English yet most of the anticipated audience did not understand it. Something had to be done about this. Kasama is in a Bemba/Tonga speaking area:

> Therefore, as soon as the actors knew their parts, they were encouraged to repeat sentences in the local dialect (...) On the day of the actual performance a speech would sometimes be delivered in Pidgin English, then Bemba followed by Tonga. (17)

The problem of language was compounded by the need to localize the stories. Mere translation and adaptation to 'Zambian' culture was not enough. Right from the outset the team had decided that the plays should contain local dances and music. But none of the University team were good at any of these so help was sought from the district government clerk at Kasama, who 'knew many of the local customs and traditions'. This meant that the actors (mostly students) 'had the additional burden of learning the songs and dances that he taught them'. (18) This brought in an unexpected addition to the workshop. The learning experience was now becoming a shared one by both the initiators of the workshop and the target audience. This has now become the pattern of all drama workshops organized by Chikwakwa Theatre. The pedantic attitude with which the first Kasama project started has given way to humility and readiness to recognize the existence of local theatrical conventions which Chikwakwa Theatre members are always anxious to learn.

Using a loudspeaker borrowed from the local political party, announcements were made about the performances being prepared. The venue chosen for performances at Kasama was the market square. Having decided on the market venue, the group

> collected together a large number of brown paper bags, partly filled them with sand, and placed lighted candles in them. These (were) arranged in a large circle which formed (the) acting area. As the plays were to be performed at night, two large bonfires (were lit) at either end of the acting space to provide additional light. (19)

Having done this the scene was set for the show in the evening.

Nearly 3.000 people turned up to see the plays. The experience was an eye opener for the University of Zambia theatre enthusiasts:

> (The) first evening resembled more a football match than an evening of plays. The paper bags were (...) moved inwards by the jostling crowds, until the acting area was reduced to only a few feet (...) The people at the back became restless and started to shout and elbow their way to the front, until the evening ended in a wild confusion. (20)

Immediately after this, thoughts on how to stop such confusion preoccupied the minds of the workshop team. The large number of audience was due to the fact that people thought there was a political meeting being held. The following day measures were taken to protect the 'lights' and the acting area. This was achieved by putting a barricade around the circle of paper bags. The local police was also brought in to assist with crowd control .

Having taken such appropriate measures against confusion like that of the night before, performances were held a second time. This time the audience listened and followed the plays :

> They shouted advice to the hero in difficulty (...) the actors responded superbly, asking advice from the audience, and using the plot of the play as only a rough guide to what should happen next (...) The crowd also joined in the local songs and dances which (had been) put into the basic script.(21)

In other words, the experience showed that the audience responded to drama in their own way. They were not a 'typical' audience with inbuilt inhibitions at displaying genuine responses where they were asked for by the text. By the end of the workshop both performers and audience were learners. The university team talked of having learnt something from the workshop in the following words:

> provided the plays were short and simple they could be put on with little rehearsal time and few facilities (...) Using the local language also had an enormous success(...) Finally using music (...) together with local dances and colourful costumes added a spectacular element which was easy to appreciate. (22)

These were important lessons to anybody who was thinking of conducting further drama workshops in the country. The Chikwakwa Theatre certainly learnt a good deal from this workshop and shaped its future work with this Kasama experience in mind.

Other workshops

After the Kasama workshop, interest in working with rural communities grew at the University of Zambia. The English Department, which initially was alone in sponsoring drama activity at the University, was joined by the Department of Extra-Mural Studies. This was an added advantage to theatre practitioners as the latter had residential tutors/lecturers stationed at various places in the country. These people became very important liaison officers between visiting drama workshops teams and the rural target communities. Having these residential lecturers to work with made planning of workshops even smoother since advance plans about accommodation, food and transport could now be made.

The Department of Extra-Mural Studies was established at the University in 1967 as part of the government's wishes to provide adult education in the country. The department provides a university type of education especially organized for those who want to study on non-credit basis. The only entry qualification required is the ability to use English. (23) To this end the department offers a wide range of short and long non-degree courses at centres throughout the country. Several aims and objectives have been postulated for this work. Some of these are: 'the creation of a sense of belonging to the African community and to the wider world community; and the satisfaction of the social, aesthetic, moral and cultural needs of all members of the society'. (24) The coming together of Chikwakwa Theatre and the Department of Extra-Mural Studies meant what drama workshops had to satisfy such aims and objectives in one way or another. This was not too difficult a task for Chikwakwa Theatre because its goals were just as broad. The workshops continued to be built on the idea of creating a theatre tradition amongst the people with whom they were held. The procedure remained that of bringing along plays that were specially adapted to what were considered to be the needs of the audiences expected at the workshops' performances.

In 1971 three plays were chosen and produced during the Eastern Province theatre workshop held in Chipata. (25) These were Poisoned Cultural Meat written by Zambia's leading playwright Godfrey Kasoma (now known as Kabwe Kasoma), The Village Comes to Town written by Felix Chibushe and The Mirror written by John Ballikuddende. All the three plays had been written in English. This meant that before performance some time had to be set aside for translating and rehearsing them in an appropriate vernacular language spoken in the province. Apart from this language problem several others were beginning to be noticed. One report mentioned that :

> with evening performances every day (...) everyone was active from early morning to midnight (...) we (...) missed the very important opportunity of discussing with our Chipata friends the possibility of continuing with their theatre work after the workshop. (26)

The programmes of the workshops were too ambitious and heavy to allow room for breath. Several issues needed thrashing out for the workshops to really achieve their goals. The kind of reflection shown in the words just quoted was a direct result of the involvement of the Department of Extra-Mural Studies. Its presence ushered into Chikwakwa Theatre a sense of systematic appraisal of its work. At the end of performances either questionnaires were sent out to participants or question sessions were held with audiences to solicit responses to the workshops. Responses to the 1971 performances in the Eastern Province indicated unanimous support for the project. Comments recorded included the following entry:

> Reasons given approving the Workshop were that the performances demonstrated:
>
> (1) How the educated group in society disregards the uneducated
>
> (2) The difficulties old people have with modern life
>
> (3) The everyday scene in Zambia
>
> (4) How people behave in urban and rural areas and the contrast between their attitudes and values
>
> (5) How some people lost respect for their relatives
>
> (6) Humour. (27)

The educational aspects of the performances were not missed either. The plays were seen as pinpointing the badness of pride amongst educated elites. They were seen as encouraging humility, respect and love amongst people regardless of personal riches and achievements. In a society where the town is seen as a better place than the village, the problems and vagaries of township life exposed in the plays were seen as a lesson and warning to would-be migrants.(28) Comments made by audiences also referred to technical aspects of theatre presentation. For example, some of the audience complained about the bad acoustic and staging facilities. They pointed out that these hampered their enjoyment of the entertainment provided to the full. Out of such comments by the audience Chikwakwa Theatre could think ahead in readiness for future work:

> The plays should not be too simplistic, as much time as possible should be spent in villages while allowing time for performances in townships, a smaller group could stay longer and write its own material while in villages (...) more time should be allotted to the creation and arrangement of music and dancing, and more women should be included. (29)

Subsequent workshops tried to accomodate such suggestions. In 1972 a workshop was held in the Western Province of Mongu. The project was described as 'larger in scope (...) and ambitiously aimed to raise a theatre on the edge of the Zambezi flood plain'. An open-air theatre was finally built with the help of local people.(30) Plans were made to 'construct (...) storage and change rooms, to add finishing touches to the theatre, and put more seats'.(31) Quite clearly the question of providing staging facilities was being looked at and tackled most positively.

Apart from theatre activity Chikwakwa Theatre members embarked on Research into indigenous performances. A research project in traditional dances and folk tales of the Chewa of Lundazi was carried out during August, 1972.(32) This was seen as one way of preparing for a genuine localization of theatre activity in the Chikwakwa Theatre. The aims of this project went far beyond a cosmetic involvement with tradition. Researchers involved in the project tried:

> to gain an insight into the underlying meaning of traditional dances and folk tales and also to (...) explore the origins of the dances and folk tales plus their significance in the social system as a whole, past and present. (33)

Such work brought out unexpected projections of how far rural communities were willing to go along with Chikwakwa Theatre ideas about traditional beliefs and behaviour. This was best shown when some girls from the research team were asked not to make recordings of proceedings at a girls' initiation ceremony.(34) Another thing that was quickly learnt by the team members was that they needed more time than they had thought in order to actually and genuinely come to grips with what they were trying to research into. This also meant more money being set aside for the project.

However compounded problems seemed to grow for Chikwakwa Theatre drama workshops, the spirit to improve its work with the masses did not falter. Constantly members reminded each other of guarding against letting their theatre 'degenerating into a theatre which concentrates on the superficial, the amusing, the non-cerebral, etc.'.(35)

The workshops that followed in 1973 combined lectures and theatre activity. The question of working on meaningful and not too simplistic plays was tackled. Instead of simply bringing ready-made plays the workshops turned to improvisation and started to create plays on the spot. A workshop held in Kitwe followed this pattern:

> After the (lecture) we divided into four groups; headed by the four students from the University (i.e. Chikwakwa Theatre members). Each group was given a situation which they were to work on and make a sketch out of it. The groups first did some exercises in improvisation and voice projection (...). In the afternoon the groups worked on the sketches. When each group was ready we gathered together to watch what each group had prepared. After each group, comments were passed and suggestions were made as to how to improve on what was wrong and so on. (36)

Chikwakwa Theatre members here only acted as group leaders. Most of the work and discussion was a shared experience. In this particular workshop there were thirty participants. Work on improvisation was suddenly becoming central in all workshops. It was seen as the best way to inculcate various skills necessary for good acting and presentation of a drama. The play creation at this point in time though, was limited to short sketches rather than full length plays. Chikwakwa Theatre needed more experience in this sort of work. They had to go back to the drawing boards as it were and learn a few more tricks. The drawing room for the Chikwakwa Theatre all the time is the Department of English at the University of Zambia which houses lecturers of drama. It is here that the seminal ideas on group play creation started. The best example of such work is the play Matteo Sakala. A look at the way this text was created should show what is involved in such work.

8.1.3 The Creation of a Popular Play: Matteo Sakala

This play was reated by some ten students of drama studying under David Kerr in the 1976/77 academic year at the University of Zambia. The play grew out of imrpovisation exercises based on Zambian proverbs.

The ten students split into two groups, and each group selected a proverb to work with. The idea being to create a story around the proverbs in such a way as to portray their meanings and significance in Zambian society. One group chose a Chewa proverb: Fodya wako ndiyemwe ali pa mphuno (The tobacco that belongs to you is the one in your nose). This means 'you only claim a thing as yours when it is in your hands'. The other group picked a Tonga proverb which says 'The monkeys laughed at each other's ugly faces'. The meaning here is self evident. Having selected the proverbs the groups embarked on improvising around them. The main idea of the exercise was simply to gain some 'training in characterization and other dramatic skills'.(37) There was no intention to develop a performance. However when the groups finished improvising and returned to show each other what they had done to the proverbs they felt compelled to do more work on their sketches and evolve a full length production. This meant bringing the two sketches together to make one play.

The first proverb led to a story which involved the humiliation of a proud young man who wished to obtain his chief's thumbprint for some passport papers. The second group came up with a story dealing with a hypocritical 'pompous Minister of National Ethics' who gets scandalized when his wallet is stolen by a young pickpocket 'but who is himself caught a little later being involved in corrupt financial dealings'.(38)

These two sketches were found not sufficient by themselves. So further improvisation on possible developments was carried out. The young man of the first sketch became the protagonist of the entire play which ended up with four acts. The first two acts were linked by making the young man a relation of the Minister who shares his downfall at the end of the second act. In the third act the young man, now jobless, joins and later becomes a leader of the gang which pickpocketted his uncle. By the fourth and last act the young man has degenerated so much that he has to go back to his village if he is to survive in this world at all.

The play

The first act entitled 'The Passport' spreads over three scenes in which we see Matteo Sakala dreaming about anticipated life in the United Kingdom where he is waiting to go for studies. To get to the United Kingdom he needs a passport. He can only get this after his traditional chief, back in the village, has signed some affidavit documents certifying he was born in Zambia. This necessitates a trip back to his village and its ways, which Matteo is not willing to go through until events force him to do so. Living in the city most of his time, his manners, ways and language have changed. He has become pompous. He looks down upon village life. He sees it as 'still in the stone age'. (39) Because he belongs to the group of very few people who have had some western education in his village, he thinks everybody there should bow to him and do whatever he asks them to do.

In other words he has become arrogant.

The villagers he comes into contact with are quick to notice this arrogance. The chief particularly is quick to notice this. They all blame such arrogance on town life which they say 'scatters (their) children's brains'. They think it is their duty to re-educate Matteo back into line with village manners. This re-education process is a humiliating experience for Matteo. Starting with strong headedness, he refuses to succumb to such a process. Instead he showers abuse on everybody he is dealing with - including the chief from whom he expects to gain some favours. But with time and after both spiritual and physical degradation Matteo temporarily succumbs to the demands of the village. This he does just to get his documents signed by the chief. Thinking he has outwitted his people he runs away, back to Lusaka (the city) only to find his girl friend as well as his sponsors - for the scholarship to the United Kingdom - have jilted him. His dreams are thus shattered. He counted his chicks before eggs had hatched. In this way the act fulfils the proverb which gave it rise.

The second act continues with the misfortunes of Matteo. Having failed to go abroad, he chooses to follow the shortest means to success by trying to get a job through 'nepotism'. He gets one without trouble but only for two weeks. Not long after he is given a job by his uncle who is also Minister of Ethics, does he (the uncle) get the sack for corruption .... theft by public servant and nepotism....(40) These are vagaries he always spoke against as Minister of Ethics. So it is ironical that he should lose his ministerial portfolio over such charges. Matteo Sakala is swept along in this downfall. The moral of the uncle's story is summarised in the comment by his secretary:

> (...) Our people back home in the village say the monkeys laughed each others' ugly faces. But I think this monkey (the minister) called Chitumbo has got the ugliest face. (41)

This thus rounds up the second proverb of the improvisation exercise. For Matteo the world seems to come to a standstill. He cannot understand why misfortune should dog him wherever he goes. All his attempts to make it in life seem to be frustrated in one way or another. That is why he asks:

> why is it everthing I touch seems to turn to shit? (42)

Matteo does not understand himself, nor does he pause to try and do so. Blindly, he rushes from one mistake to another. It would seem that his upbringing has not prepared him for life in his society. So from this misfortune he rushes on to another when je joins the Lusaka city pickpockets in the third act.

Scene of the third act treats us to the life of the underground world of pickpockets. Matteo witnesses a former classmate successfully steal from a man standing in a queue trying to board a bus. Compelled by the dexterity and carefree life style of his friend Matteo is persuaded to join his gang rather than waste time looking for a decent job. All he needs to do is 'just become like a mother rapin shark'. At least it's better than drowning'. (43) Becoming such a shark as he quickly learns, involves hardships of their own kind:

Steady: Okay, Killer, how'd you make out today? (Killer stands to re-enact the scene. Matteo becomes more and more engrossed in the accounts.)

Killer: Ah, nickisi. I eyed this old goat, see, with a big handbag. I tuned I was gonna be loaded, right? Cos the old goat screened load okay. But the bag turned into a portable latrine, man.

Steady: Why? What brewed?

Killer: As I dipped in real neat, I fished out a baby's napkin. Ya man, it was covered in shit. (44)

Such experiences end up very frustrating on the gang. Very often they break into fights. At one such moment Matteo's superiority surfaces as he quickly stops a fight between his friend Steady and Killer shouting:

Matteo: You fellers are wasting your time. How can you organize yourselves when you spend all day kicking each other's guts out?

From this point on he asserts himself and becomes the brains of the gang. He reorganizes procedures and gives a new face to the gang which he renames "Fresh Air Company":

Matteo: Look at Killer. Got his hands all shitty on the nappy. That needn't happen. You work together. Rational mobilization of personnel. You need division of labour. Number one finds some dope with money. Number two steals - passes it to number three who runs off. Get it? Streamline your channels of communcation. Integrate your work force. I wasn't in the world of commerce for nothing. (45)

All this seems smooth talk. Matteo is not really cut out for such business. After all he has not got any track record to boast of. So when Killer expresses his scepticism we understand why:

Killer: (...) But I tune Matteo's a real jive-ass smooth talker. I tune he ain't got the balls for the real action. (46)

These words are proved right when Matteo makes his first and only attempt at pickpocketting, in a bid to prove Killer wrong. He gets caught and receives a good thrashing. His friends desert him. This one experience is enough to make Matteo remember his village. So he returns to his people. Life in town has proved too tough for him. (47)

It is a subdued and humble Matteo who returns to the village in the fourth act. Although he tells a good deal of lies to save his face, he is genuine in his intentions of wanting to stay in the village. He manages to get some land from the chief along with a wife to take care of him. By this time he has come to undertsand himself and the complicated nature of the world he lives in. He can afford to claim that experience is the best teacher. That is why by the end of the play he can look forward to the birth of a son in his family and say:

> Believe me, I'll be able to give him some good lessons. A one-man survival course. Who knows, perhaps he'll grow up lucky and have a better life than mine? (48)

This is what the play Matteo Sakala is about: A young man's survival in modern Zambia.

Lessons from Matteo Sakala

Performances of this play were scheduled to take place at several venues in and outside Lusaka city. Three performances were held at Matere Community Hall, Ridgeway Campus Theatre and the Natural Resources Development College on 18th January 1977, 15th and 17th February 1977 respectively. During the month of March the play was taken out to Kabine at Nkurumah College.

The work that was presented to the public was described by the theatre group as a play 'still semi-improvised in nature and based on ultimately a cooperative effort both in terms of script and production'. (49)

People seem to have enjoyed the performance.(50) As a result of this success, University of Zambia drama students together with their lecturer David Kerr went on to create another play, along similar lines as those followed in the creation of Matteo Sakala, called Rambo Kachasu.(51) Groups outside the University started to work along the lines of Matteo Sakala.(52) Matteo Sakala was a success because of several reasons: The closeness of themes being treated in the play to Zambian contemporary life; the appropriateness of the language used and the incorporation of indigenous Zambian songs and dances. Although the production was well received by the audiences who watched it, some people noticed a few technical as well as thematic flaws within it. These were largely due to the fact that the work had been "co-authored" and "co-produced".(53) It is interesting to look at the success and failure of the production closely.

The problems that the play depicted are current in Zambian society. But except for corruption amongst political leaders all problems related to the process of urbanization were always there even during the colonial period. A United Nations report of Social Advancement in Non-Self-Governing Territories issued in the 1950s mentions that problems of housing, education and health were acute in the territory of Northern Rhodesia. The report went thus:

The increase in the number of Africans seeking employment in

> towns throughout the Territory led to considerable overcrowding in the cities and African Housing on the Copperbelt (was) one of the most difficult problems. (45)

The situation has not improved. A quarter of a century later Independent Zambia is still fighting this problem.(55) The capital of the country, Lusaka, in which Matteo Sakala, the protagonist of our play, meets his suffering has a population of approximately 150.000 people and 12.000 of these are estimated to be squatters living in shanty towns around the perimeters of the city.(56) Most young people from rural areas are trying, like Matteo Sakala, to run away from the poverty, underemployment and boredom of their lives by going to town in the hope of finding paid employment and more exciting lives there.(57) But the harsh realities of life in developing countries hit them in the face as they discover that jobs are not easy to come by. This leads to disillusionment and adoption of antisocial means of survival like hooliganism, theft and so on. The "Fresh Air Company" of Lusaka pick pockets in the play should be seen in this light. Although Matteo Sakala's presence in the city is not properly explained, he typifies the truth. Most young people in Matteo's position forget their rural homes until things become unbearable. That is if they are lucky to remember at all, otherwise prison becomes their permanent home.

Given this sort of atmosphere in which there is virtually no hope, man must survive by his wits. This might mean abandoning all morality as it is known by his society.

The corruption of Uncle Chitumbo the minister is another theme that relates directly to current Zambian life. President Kaunda of Zambia has talked of the exploitation of the masses by elites in his country in the following terms:

> This is one of the things which make me very sad. The idea that a man who yesterday was himself oppressed cannot have the moral and spiritual courage to stand up to temptation .... This elitist approach to life is a cancer which must be fought.(58)

Mr. Chitumbo's sack in the play is part of this fight to get rid of undesirable elements in society. But his return to power, even if it is in a different capacity, by the end of the play talks of another dimension to the game of politics in Zambia. Matteo says of him thus:

> As for uncle Chitumbo, you know when he falls he just somehow bounces back up again. His court case was dismissed for lack of evidence. The main exhibits were mysteriously stolen from court. He somehow managed to get himself a good managing director's job in one of the smaller parastatals.(59)

Thematically the play leaves no stone unturned. It poses several questions relating to Zambian society. In the spirit of Chikwakwa Theatre and that of encouraging relevant theatre Matteo Sakala displays how far this has been done in Zambia.

To achieve this the team which worked on the improvisation relied heavily on their power of observation. The speeches given to the various characters sound genuine. They fit the mouths of those who utter them. The "Fresh Air Company" formation scene has already been quoted. The power and vividness of this scene is a result of research amongst would be pick-pockets. An account of how this scene was worked out says that:

> David Kerr (gave) a brief to the actors playing pickpockets to observe the language of pickpockets, grade 7 drop outs and "Mishanga" pedlars. (At a later stage David Kerr (went) with these actors for a field trip to Cairo Road, to do some observation ...) (60)

The use of proverbs in African literature has now become a cliché which works in helping to authenticate the indigenousness of African experiences in Literature. Sometimes they simply serve to enhance an exotic aura around the literature. But Matteo Sakala went beyond simply employing proverbs in speech to actually making them the backbone of the story. By developing stories which worked out the meaning of the proverbs, the theatre group was going beyond the "exotism" of Chinua Achebe in say Things Fall Apart (61) where proverbs sound more like an archives' crackle of a page from an old book. The experiment of Matteo Sakala was reshaping language and showing how much alive it was even in post-independent Africa.

With an episodic lay-out the creators of Matteo Sakala do not seem to know how best to link the scenes. At one point they use curtains, at another they use Matteo as a narrator who is, in a sense telling the audience the story of his life. Because of this lack of consistency in style of presentation the play reads clumsily. Even on stage one visualizes awkward moments of waiting for curtains to be drawn. This problem was dealt with in the next experiment Bambo Kachasu in which 'the presentation of events was done fluidly without any curtains or scene breaks, and ... all the scenes were portrayed simultaneously on the stage'.(62) Such fluidity and unity was achieved through the use of a singer who sang commentaries and links between different scenes. David Kerr describes the singer in this way:

> His role was something like that of a narrator in a traditional African story, although in other ways his function was more that of a Greek chorus. Sometimes he helped to tell the story; more often he provided a moral commentary on the actions guiding the audience's attitudes to the events;(63)

The ideas which this group came up with are not new to anyone with some knowledge of western theatre. As members of the group themselves conceded, the whole project has similarities with Brecht's ideas of folk theatre. But more than this the experiences of the group seem to be common ones amongst people aimimg at creating a theatre for the masses in Africa.

8.2. THE ZAMBIAN INTERNATIONAL THEATRE INSTITUTE (1). THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP AT CHALIMBANA (2). FOLLOW-UP WORK BY TAFIKA THEATRE.

8.2.1 Chalimbana Theatre for Development Workshop 1979

The Zambia International Theatre Institute organized a theatre for development workshop at Chalimbana in August, 1979. Participants to the workshop were drawn from all over the world. Several bodies, both local and international, made donations towards the running of the workshop.(64)

The rationale put forward by the International Theatre Institute (I.T.I.) was that extension workers in various agencies of rural development were dissatisfied with existing techniques of communication between them and the masses. It claimed that these people were looking for a fresh way of communicating with the masses. Although they had attempted in the 60s and 70s to improve their methods by turning to drama as a technique for informal education, they had failed because they did not have theatrical expertise.(65)

On the other hand Chikwakwa Theatre work with the masses, though welcome, was found to lack on understanding of the masses themselves. In other words theatre practitioners lacked the expertise and experience of extension workers in dealing with people. Their work was not based on sound research findings, but feelings and current rhetoric in Third World politics. Chikwakwa Theatre's attempts to induce a truly Zambian theatre were impaired by a lack of

> time to discuss with their audiences the issues raised by their plays, (to allow) real evaluation of the impact of theatre on rural development to take place.(66)

More than this, the I.T.I. felt that Chikwakwa Theatre lacked 'coordination with social workers and extension officers. It was not based on research on the target audiences'.(67) Time had come for theatre people and extension workers to come together. This is what the I.T.I. tried to bring about in their Chalimbana theatre for development workshop.

As it happened interest in the workshop was not confined to the I.T.I. organizers alone. The government of Zambia was particularly keen to support it. Quite apart from recognizing the need for a revitalized approach to methods of communicating with the masses, the national party (U.N.I.P.) also saw such attempts as a means to restore Zambian culture to its proper place.(68)

The workshop organizers themselves, however, seemed to place very little emphasis on this aspect. This was very much reflected in their aims and choice of participants to the workshop. The aims of the project were:

- To bring together theatre artists from East, Central and Southern Africa so that they may exchange, develop and apply their skills to help solve problems of rural development in their countries.

- To stimulate an awareness among participants of the relevance of theatre arts to the problems of community and the individual in the development of their own communities.

- To identify problem areas in rural development which can be gainfully evaluated and researched for future planning and organisation which should involve the application of skills and insights derived from the performing arts.(69)

Participants came from Zambia, Botswana, Lesotho, Canada, United States of America and Tanzania. Their expertise covered theatre skills, adult education, community development, public health, puppetry, music and research methodology. This wide ranging expertise brought the workshop much closer to the need for having extension/community workers join together with theatre practitioners in their attempts to bring about rural development amongst the masses.

Workshop Methodology

The methodology followed at this workshop involved identification of an appropriate location, one that displayed all the ills that extension workers would be interested in. And so, Chalimbana, close to the capital city Lusaka was selected. This was a sub-urban area ridden with all sorts of 'social stresses' common to peri-urban communities.(70)

Such 'social stresses' in Chalimbana were seen to lead to community instability, poor housing, malnutrition, thefts, beer drinking, prostitution, witchcraft and all the 'problems associated with rapid social and cultural change'.(71) These provided a rich source for subject matter to be considered in creating performances during the workshop.

All the work at the workshop was built around research material from this Chalimbana community. Participants at the workshop carried out research amongst the people in order to identify their ethnic background, their problems and their indigenous theatre conventions. These research findings were taken back to the workshop venue where they were analysed and subsequently formed the basis of performances taken back to the community. At the end of each performance there were discussions of issues raised and dealt with by the performances.

The workshop tried to avoid using standard research methods. It agreed on participatory research methods which emphasized the need for making the research target participate in the investigation process itself rather than simply remaining passive. This was something which the Botswana participants at the workshop initiated drawing on their own experience of Loedza Batanani Popular Theatre in their country and the work of Paolo Freire in Latin America.

This participatory research went beyond merely identifying problems. It included making decisions over what problems should be in the performances. Problems were identified and brought to the whole workshop gathering. These findings were scrutinized and discussed in terms of their accuracy and relevancy by the group.(72)

These formed the basis of improvised play scripts which were rehearsed and presented back amongst the Chalimbana dwellers. Two days were set aside for these performances. All performances ended with a discussion of what had been presented in them. Whenever possible villagers were encouraged to join in the performances. The performances covered drama, dance, song and puppetry. (73)

Comments on the workshop

When the workshop was drawing to an end each team made some remarks on their experience with theatre for development. These covered overall administration of the entire workshop, educational and aesthetic aspects of such work, and finally the future of theatre for development in Zambia. It was generally felt that such work needed more time than the workshop provided. This would allow thorough and in-depth participatory research to take place. On the other hand more time spent with a target community would make it possible for people to know better not just the problems therein, but the local culture. This in turn would enable theatre practitioners to evolve presentations which would not only be meaningful to the people but also rooted in their own culture. In this way problems like the one the puppetry group experienced where puppets were identified with witchcraft could be avoided. (74)

Referring to the idea of 'participatory research' during the workshop, Amandina Lihamba - a member of the Tanzanian delegation there - had a few reservations about the way it was followed. She says that:

> Participatory research has a lot to recommend it but as far as the workshop in Zambia went ... the people's participation was very limited.

> In the end, it was the seminar groups which brought the people what they thought were the solutions to the problems dealt with. Even though there were no overt 'party attitudes' paraded, one felt that behind it all, it was the national government and party wishes which were guiding the hoped for results. The local people participated in the discussions after the performances but it would be difficult to measure the amount of conscientization achieved through the workshop itself.(75)

It was also felt that the workshop lacked a sense of direction. This was attributed to the fact that 'at the "participatory research" stage ... the village representatives who were contacted were often not key people in the communities'. For future work it was suggested that those involved should identify 'key people, councillors, village headmen, influential women, in advance of research activities.(76)

Although the workshop brought together theatre practitioners and extension workers from a variety of fields, there was no firm commitment on the latter's part to provide continuity. It was strongly felt that the idea of theatre for development could only take hold if such people were fully committed to it:

> Volunteers in the villages who agreed to do some of the things suggested by the performances could not be expected to carry out a programme of change and development, no matter how well intentioned, without the help of local agencies and extension officers. (77)

It was also generally agreed that the Chalimbana workshop was not an ideal sample of theatre for development work. Delegates were expected only to see it as a demonstration of the capabilities of this work. The superficiality of the workshop removed it from reality. No one in the workshop could guarantee that the work done amongst Chalimbana residents was going to produce results.

Some of the dramas presented around Chalimbana villages were criticized for presenting stereotype characters at the expense of reflecting the real truth of the situation the dramas were dealing with.

A number of participants felt that:

> as artists they had not benefited from the workshop as much as they had hoped they would. They felt that the workshop's emphasis had been on community development and not drama and art ... a better balance between the needs of artists and the needs of community workers would have been desirable.(78)

Commenting on the same issue Amandina Lihamba felt that the workshop had actually 'failed to exploit the strength of theatre ... instead of pushing the participants to choose and explore the most effective theatre expressions it settled too readily for the easiest'. (79)

In spite of all these criticisms it was also generally agreed by all participants that what the workshop was aiming for should be welcome by everybody in Zambia. The International Theatre Institute of Zambia was called upon to hold further workshops and sell the idea of theatre for development to the government of Zambia as an approach to 'the diffusion of information in the rural areas (as it was found to be) more effective than radio or the mass media for passing on information (amongst the masses)'.(80) Follow-up projects were therefore planned before delegates dispersed to their various homes. These were to take place in the provinces of the country. Committees leading these provincial projects were:

> requested to take into consideration
> the specific regional problems and
> on-going development projects by
> government agencies or community
> voluntary organisations to which
> their follow-up projects could be linked.(81)

These projects were directly linked to the International Theatre Institute of Zambia, but local drama groups and local communities were drawn in to make them a reality. The first thing to be done was to train would be participants in theatre for development ideas. The coaching teams were made up of people who had been to the Chalimbana workshop. Because the work was more directly and obviously connected to work that the government or public agencies were interested in organizers received a helping hand from all sorts of people ranging from government officials to village party leaders. In its report for the Chalimbana Workshop International Theatre Institute of Zambia boasted of having so far approved six projects in Northern, Copperbelt, Southern, Central, Lusaka and Western provinces of the country.(82)

But no matter how successful the Chalimbana workshop might have been, continuity in theatre for development could only be assured if other agencies with financial backing showed some interest in this work. The International Theatre Institute has always said that their work would receive better and enthusiastic response if they had a steady budget. But as things are at the moment the whole organisation

> is run on an entirely voluntary basis and (it) is financed from contributions made to it from time to time by international and national organisations. Without a fixed budget very little will be achieved in the way of a meaningful follow-up. The ball is now in the Government's court. Community development, the Ministries of Education, and Agriculture should take note of this challenging experiment and begin to evolve more appropriate methods for promoting rural development and change.(83)

8.2.2 Tafika Theatre and the Alcohol Theatre Project

The Alcohol Theatre Project was one of the many offshoots of the Zambia International Theatre Institute 'theatre for development' workshop held at Chalimbana in 1979. It was started in September 1981 at Chawana compound in Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia by the Tafika Theatre Group based at Kaunda Square within the city. The group is made up of Tapiwa Muchenje, Gabriel Kapili, Brian Njovu, Christine Phiri and Dickson Ngoma. The following month the group moved 120 km from Lusaka to cover some six villages grouped under Munacisompola.(84) The project was carried out in collaboration with a research team, from the Institute for African Studies at the University of Zambia, which was investigating alcoholism and related problems in Zambia. This was part of world-wide investigation being sponsored by the World Health Organisation. In Zambia this coincided with a campaign known as *Health for all by the year 2000 A.D. and after*. Whilst Tafika Theatre Group only played a supportive role in the investigation on alcoholism, bringing 'health to the people' became their main objective. In doing this they intended:

> to use POPULAR theatre - under the term THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT - as a tool for implementation (of the campaign. The group also intended) to let the local people do the theatre themselves.(85)

This work was geared towards maximizing community involvement in identifying development needs through the process of participatory research as advocated by the Chalimbana workshop of 1979. Tafika Theatre Group's approach was to first of all identify 'general development' needs and then concentrate on those relevant to alcoholism and its problems.(86) Theatre was being used as one way of facilitating all-sided discussion and identification of the problems. In a sense this was a test of what the Chalimbana workshop was trying to promote in Zambia. On the whole the project stuck to Chalimbana procedures. A few observation were made by Tafika Theatre Group which the workshop had not anticipated.

Although the Chalimbana workshop emphasized the advantages of participatory research, it did not discuss the amount of time that would be required for it to actually produce fruitful and genuine results. Neither did it discuss problems that were likely to be met by anyone trying to use it. Tafika Theatre Group met all these in the raw. They found out that unless one became totally immersed in the life of the community it was almost impossible to establish genuine interaction between the researcher and the community. This meant that instead of simply going into a village and asking questions or engaging in formal discussions with the villagers they had to join them in their everyday life. And they found out that this way none of the villagers 'knew who (they) were because (they) only joined talking groups at taverns, bars, homes, markets etc. just like ordinary local people.(87) In a sense the group was hiding its identity. Where this failed to work researchers were sometimes taken to be detectives investigating some crime in which case people would refuse to have anything to do with them.

The question of language was taken for granted in the Chalimbana workshop. Tafika Theatre Group discovered that for any work in theatre for development to really succeed its practitioners must not only share the language of the community they are working with, but know the dialects, slang, nuances, etc. that the various sections making that community develop out of it. This ensured that words used in the dramas that were created were done so in a language that all the local people understood, not just a section.

As it turned out the drama created was concerned with how bad excessive beer drinking can be. Basing themselves on one woman's story of how beer drinking affected her family life Tafika Theatre Group created a play. The woman's account went as follows:

> My husband divorced me and took all my two children saying that I caused the death of my other two children because of hunger, which he says was caused by my negligency because of my drunkardness.(88)

Together with this, other comments and views collected during the research period were referred to and included to make the story as truthful and relevant as possible.

Discussions which were held after the show were conducted in two separate groups. One for children whilst the other was for adults. The group had this to say about after-performance discussion:

> The post-performance discussion did not go as planned. That is, to talk to the audience after all the activities. The priest who manages the dance troupe in Chawana advised us not to use this technic (sic). He told us that if we tell people the show is over and we would like to talk to you, we would never see anybody. He said the people would all go away if we used that method. Instead, his cultural dances troupe continued to perform after we did our play. So while the dances were being performed we scattered into the audience and started asking questions. This formula worked out alright and we ended up forming up groups which got involved and almost forgot there were dances going on. (89)

The holding of the plays alongside dances led to some confusion amongst some of the audience. Some thought the whole performance was a competition between the dancers and the theatre group. Asked to comment on the day's events some of them said the theatre group had won whilst others argued the dance troupe had. In spite of this confusion some poignant comments were made. These were the ones relevant to the purpose of the exercise, which was to find out what people thought about alcoholism or simply drinking beer.

Some people argued that beer was not bad otherwise 'the Government would not go into pains brewing it'. (90) Others commented that the group (Tafika Theatre) 'should be bringing such plays ... every week-end'. (91) Others suggested 'New measures for legal and illegal brewers should be introduced to limit quantity of beer'.

The comments noted by the Tafika Group are very interesting indeed:

> If more advice is not given now and half the population of this country (Zambia) became like the drunk in the play, ... what will become of our country.
>
> A lot more recreation activities like this one you have brought us in the answer to the question of drunkenness.
>
> I started drinking because of hunger. My husband never gave me enough money to buy food at home, so I used to go to the tavern to have a free drink of chibuku from friends. The only problem which prevailed later was that of my children, they suffered from malnutrition.
>
> I can not stop drinking beer! Your play is useless.
>
> There is humanism in practice in your play when the other guy ... bought beer for his friends. I think besides being entertaining the play was very educative. (92)

Obviously the Tafika Theatre Group felt very satisfied with the results of this project. In their report to the Research Team the group stressed the need for further work on 'alcoholism', but at a local level. Apart from suggesting that the research team should have their own theatre group, it recommended that local groups be formed in affected areas.(93) When the group conducted a similar tour in Mwacisompola, they went further to provoke participants in the post-performance discussion to suggest what they thought was the best way of dealing with alcoholism in the community. (94)

Chapter Nine

9. CONCLUSION

Analysis of Theatre for Development work

This chapter is an analysis of the work just described. This is done through an examination of (a) the rationale put forward by those who are engaged in theatre for development, (b) the thearetical framework on which the work seems to rest both as a process of developing the masses and theatre practice, and (c) the effectiveness of the ideas that are being pursued in practice.

The examples of theatre work given in this book fall under two groups of practitioners, viz: government agents and autonomous practitioners. The puppetry work of the Extension Services Branch in Malawi belongs to the first group. David Kerr would include this amongst 'institutions and communication media which stem from elitism of colonial education'. Being such it fails to produce results in adult education. And because of this failure it has given rise to the second group to which the Chancellor College Travelling Theatre (Mbalachanda), and the Zambia International Theatre Institute workshops belong. It is important to make this distinction here because it explains the differences and limitations of each group in their endeavours to 'improve' the masses.

Puppetry work of the Extension Services Branch in Malawi is carried out by people who have been trained in formal schools and specialist institutions of agriculture. They are literate and in paid employment. Their survival depends on salaries from the government. Within Malawian society these belong to the 'petits bourgeois'. Unlike these, the farmers to whom the puppetry is directed form the peasantry or proletariat of Malawian society. These depend for their living on what they grow and what they are able to sell to the other group or the government at prices usually dictated either directly or indirectly by the latter. There exists an interesting relationship between these two groups which explains the attitudes and behaviour each of them displays towards each other and the puppetry under discussion here.

Although the Extension Services Branch workers carry no particular doctrines when they go about their work amongst farmers, they still display certain values and ideas which determine their relationship to the people they work with. Most of these have been inherited from colonial days. These were days which saw nothing good and intelligent amongst the natives of Malawi. Agricultural work that went on at the time assumed that all native methods were and had to be replaced by new and modern ones from Europe. The little extension work that was there at the time resorted to coersion rather than humane methods in such work. The coming of independence led to the repeal of all coersive methods and insisted on 'educational' methods, but not on a revaluation of attitudes. So even today, almost twenty years after independence, Malawian peasant farmers are treated as devoid of any intelligence. They have to be fed information in a manner which assumes they know absolutely nothing about 'good modern agriculture'. They are treated as passive recipients of this information. They cannot question anything that is modern in agriculture.

Led by such a relationship between extension workers and farmers, and an uncompromising attitude on the former group's part, techniques of production and presentation in the puppetry work of the department only appear as integrative propaganda of the worst type. Theatre practitioners treated their audiences and society as passive. They did not expect them to question or complain about anything. (1)

The puppets in use on campaigns are created from the audiences that they are meant for. They are not created out of critical observation of the lives of the expected audiences. The messages they carry are propounded by agriculture specialists in isolation of other personnel involved in the puppetry itself. The bureaucratic procedures insisted upon by the Extension Services Branch only help to mystify the work of extension personnel.

It is therefore not surprising that some audiences are indifferent to such work. For there is no relationship between the form that this theatre takes and the context it carries. Whilst the messages might be deemed important and integral to the 'Agricultural' life of the peasantry of the country, the language which this theatre employs in relaying them is not relevant and not well thought out. By language here is meant a much broader means of communication than 'words' per se. For any theatre work amongst peasants to be meaningful and successful, it must be built on the language of their entertainment. This means understanding the culture of the people and borrowing from it the said language. Puppertry by Extension Services Branch in Malawi has nothing in common with the culture of the people it is taken to. Otherwise some of the opposition referred to earlier on would not be therefore. Creating scenarios with a typical Malawian family set up is not sufficient in itself.

The object of puppet theatre in this department, just like it is for other extension work therein, is to improve the efficiency of agriculture in the country. Bradfield lists several factors as necessary for any development of efficient agriculture. These include farming efficiency, efficient marketing, conservation and wise use of natural resources, farm management, family welfare, social and economic improvement of the community.(2) This calls for an integrated approach to development. Malawi's policy in rural development has insisted on this approach in some measure. This is why quite apart from agriculture extension workers, one also finds community development and health workers in rural areas of the country. A look at one of these factors in the context of Malawi is worthwhile if only to show how effective agriculture extension work is. The sort of agriculture being encouraged amongst farmers is aimed at increasing the production of cash crops. This means the farmers must also be provided with an efficient, honest and reliable marketing system. In Malawi this job is left in the hands of the Agricultural Development and

Marketing Corporation (ADMARC) which buys crops from farmers and sells them on the world market. In a country where the majority of the people are not only rural but dependent on agriculture for their livelihood such a board works both as a market and buffer against fluctuating world market prices. Ideally the marketing board should ensure that the farmers get a fair price for their crops, otherwise all work in extension geared towards improving peasant agriculture in the country no longer seems benevolent. The work of the Extension Service Branch would therefore be positive only in as far as it attempts to employ on 'imaginative' way of imparting knowledge to the masses. Beyond this, it would be very limited because it would not encourage a critical spirit amongst those it reaches. The appreciation of the puppets that people show neither stems from the messages they carry nor from the format in which the puppets are manipulated by the operators. The messages are taken for granted. The large percentage of children at shows only supports this view.

Puppetry is not an indigenous theatre tradition in Malawi. So any critical appreciation of such work by Malawians can not go beyond simply an expression of 'escapist' fun. They cannot say whether the puppet operator was making a mistake or not. They might comment on the music and the words in the recording because they are recognizable from their own lives, but not on the puppets except where they are rejected totally on cultural grounds.

As far as the Extension Services Branch people are concerned, the audience does not matter in determining the effectiveness of the puppetry as a medium for relaying specific information. Judging by attendance numbers at shows they believe they can weight the impact of the messages. At the same time the annual repetition of messages as decided by the agricultural calendar of the country implies they are only absorbed by the audience temporarily. As a work of art this theatre is dead. In fact one could say it is killed at its conception. By being made to set speeches and a set pattern of presentation which totally ignore indigenous aesthetics, puppet theatre of Extension Services Branch does not only fail to respect audience responses but engages in what David Kerr rightly calls 'manipulative' work. Puppet theatre in Malawi is not and cannot be popular theatre unless it is built on indigenous modes of entertainment. What it is at the moment, if anything, is 'populist' theatre.

Of course Extension Services Branch does not make any claims to propagating 'popular theatre'. Such rhetoric is left to the other group of practitioners of 'theatre for development'. To a large extent these are autonomous, although from time to time they came into close contact with the government it is mostly either because they seek approval for their work or because they want support in some particular project. Their ideas in this work are not necessarily directed by government policy.

The work of the Chancellor College Travelling Theatre at Mbalachanda; and the Zambia International Theatre Institute in Zambia is based on Paulo Freire's ideas on adult education and social change.(3) These ideas are concerned with improving the masses, helping them to overcome their sense of powerlessness to act on their own behalf.(4) Ross Kidd and Martin Byram interpret this 'sense of powerlessness to act' as mere apathy.(5) These, along with other theatre practitioners believe that such a situation can only be corrected by encouraging the said powerless people to participate in the process of shaping their lives. Freire says this should be accompanied by a critical awareness and a keen sense for action. An educational programme that manages to bring this about engages in what he calls a process of 'conscientization'.(6) In practical terms theatre practitioners in Malawi and Zambia have interpreted this as getting the people to identify and discuss their development needs with the view of reaching some solutions and taking appropriate action. Their work therefore involves the masses in actually identifying problems which form the themes, and the creation of dramas that make up their theatre. In order to avoid the possibility of dominance by a few well placed personalities in such a process, theatre practitioners become 'field workers (and) conduct interviews with people' directly. This process is referred to as 'participatory research'.(7)

Freire does not necessarily suggest that theatre should be used as a method for bringing about 'conscientization'. His disciples have chosen it as one way of meeting this goal because they believe that theatre can be used for extension work and adult education very effectively. As entertainment it catches and holds the interest of large numbers of people. As a dramatic way of presenting local problems, it makes the audience and the players themselves see these problems in a fresh and critical way. Through discussion (both during the creation of the play and after performance) people talk about the problems with others and see what can be done about them. Ross Kidd and Martin Byram refer to theatre for development as both a method and a goal. They say that whilst this theatre mediates development messages, its very creation involves the masses in the process that its practitioners believe to be central to active participation in development of communities.

The effectiveness of this work can only be measured against what the process of rural and urban development in Malawi and Zambia is like. The best place to start this assessment is Freire's work. His work started in Brazil under socio-political and economic conditions that did not work in the interest of the masses. Freire's major concern here was to re-awaken the masses to their plight and induce them into activity which would better their lives. With a new government, interested in exploiting the masses, coming to power such efforts proved unpopular.(8) Freire was thus exiled to Chile. There he embarked on yet another programme of conscientization amongst the masses, until he moved to the World Council of Churches to become a consultant on adult education. Since most adult education work has tended to emphasize 'literacy' in their programmes, Freire's ideas on this suffice as an example of how he works.

Stressing the need for demystifying literacy, he has persistently suggested that all adult literacy programmes be truly meaningful to those desiring to be literate.(9) He insists that literacy should go beyond the process of identifying letters of the alphabet or counting figures, to include the process of preparing such people participate actively in their development. Towards this goal, his classes are built around issues directly related to the existence of the people he works with. Instead of simply teaching 'words' and the various combinations that can be brought to them to make sentences Freire involves the learners in choosing such words and directs the process of generating sentences that reflect relevant issues from their lives not simple meaningless illustrative ones that conventional primers give. In his literacy work he refuses to give priority to reading and writing techniques which require him to 'separate reading the text from reading the context'. He argues that such an approach does not 'consider 'reading' the real life context (which is) lifting a veil from the world, to be the right of the people and thus it reduces literacy to a purely technical skill'.(10) He argues that literacy should help to prepare learners to participate in the process of developing themselves.

Being a consultant in adult education for him therefore does not mean becoming 'a cold, neutral uncommitted figure', but an active participant in the process of educating the people.(11) For this to happen he insists that the government and himself must agree on certain fundamentals. He is very much aware of the futility of trying to work against the government, but he also insists that he cannot work for 'a government that does not represent the people'.(12) Having established that he and the government have something in common Freire proceeds to work with the people as a 'co-worker ... rather than an applier of formulas'.(13)

In the actual teaching situation Freire says that:

> one must not think ... that learning to read and write preceeds 'conscientization' or vice versa. Conscientization occurs simultaneously with the literacy or post-literacy process ... the word is not something static or disconnected from man's existential experience but a dimension of their thought-language about the world.(14)

Inevitably this calls for an understanding of the learners' culture. For it forms the basis for relevant education. It

> functions as a context ... in which cultivating the attitude of being a curious and critical subject becomes the point of departure for learning to read and write.(15)

In other words he suggests that every society needs its own materials for teaching. The method of teaching however follows one pattern which involves

> critical and democratic participation by the learners in the act of knowing, of which they are subjects.(16)

In a nutshell Freire is calling for a redefinition of what has conventionally been known as adult education. His definition goes beyond merely making illiterate masses knowledgeable in the skills of reading and writing or using a plough or applying fertilizer to their crops. He sees it as also a process of helping the masses to articulate themselves in relation to life around them at various levels (social, political and economic). In this sense all 'development' work becomes adult education. This necessitates a new outlook, and methodology on the part of those who choose to engage in such work. It is on this basis that any work which claims Freire as its mentor must be judged.

Returning to theatre for development in Malawi and Zambia it must be emphasized that the work is only one method amongst several which might bring about what Freire calls critical and creative participation of the masses in their development. It is also important to understand the background to the 'apathy' said to be the target of theatre for development work in order to make proper assessment of its successes and failures. Quick attributes the existence of apathy amongst Zambia's rural communities to negative rural development policies of the colonial times.(17) He argues that it still exists today because those who took over the reins of government when the country became independent were involved in the propounding of rural development policies that preceded the acquisition of independence and that they have merely continued with these policies.(18)

Whilst most studies of development in independent Africa often assume a clean break between the colonial period and the independent era reality shows the contrary to be the truth.

Transition from the former to the latter state has been a good deal more complicated than meets the eye. Multinational cooperations might be the most pronounced face of neo-colonialism, but there are other areas in which it is not so prominently manifested. Since colonial days Zambia has always had a dual economy; a monetized urban sector and a rural underdeveloped sector. During the colonial days there was very little concern with rural development, if anything it was discouraged. Quick gives several reasons for this. Fear of encouraging a competitive African agriculture and that of losing cheap labour for the lucrative copper mines of the Copperbelt were amongst these reasons. The little agriculture that was going on was in the hands of Europeans. These did not want any competition from Africans so they persuaded the government to restrict any assistance in this area to themselves. On top of denying Africans agricultural assistance, legislation was passed which pushed them into the more infertile soils of the country and away from easy access to markets. This inevitably led to extensive migration from the rural areas into the mining urban centres of the Copperbelt. This way the mines had more labour than they wanted therefore they could afford to pay lower wages. Still for the African such low wages were considered better than life in the village.

Although efforts were made after the second world war to support African farming in the country, this was directed to a selected few. The bulk of the rural community remained untouched. Left on infertile soil, denied of any extension support and other services, rural

Zambia held nothing for the rural masses. The apathy that came to be was thus indirectly created by Europeans who wanted to protect their interests in the country. They were only too happy to perpetuate it.

This apathy has continued in the country because nothing has changed radically in terms of the relationship between the town and the rural sector of the country. Still largely dependent on its copper mines Zambia can ill afford expensive labour. So she continues to exploit cheap labour from the rural areas of the country. The positions left by colonial Europeans have been taken over by an elite group with its own ambitions and beliefs detrimental to the development of the masses.(19) Although the political rhetoric of the country suggests some form of 'micro-socialism', nothing in concrete terms has been achieved to bridge the gap between the town and the village, between the educated elite of the country and the illiterate masses of the rural areas.

The situation in Malawi is different. The idea of self-reliance and self-help is a realized dogma in Malawi. Several rural development projects in the country have been achieved through this idea. Roads criss-crossing most of the rural sector of the country have been constructed and are frequently maintained by villagers on a self-help basis. Schools and teachers' houses have been erected the same way.(20) Currently (since 1968) there is a 'rural piped-water project' under way in the country in which the rural community digs trenches from village to village (at no pay) whilst the government provides piping and technical expertise to connect water and maintain pipes.(21) The way this project is going on shows to what extent villagers participate in rural development in Malawi:

> Each project is first discussed at a public meeting attended by local chiefs, members of parliament and party officials. If the community feels the project is a good idea they appoint an overall project committee which carries the authority of all the community leaders ... Sections committees are also formed taking charge of different pipe sections. Finally village committees are set up and they oversee the construction and maintenance of the tap site (etc).(22)

Given such a nearly romantic picture of rural development in the country one wonders what sort of apathy existed at Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre, to attract the Chancellor College Travelling Theatre there. A brief in-depth look at the area's socio-economic make up reveals that 'apathy' can in fact exist at a deeper level than most development experts imagine.

The creation of the Rural Growth Centres in the country has three main objectives:

- To create focal points of development in remote or neglect areas of Malawi by providing social and economic services to the rural population.
- To contribute to the decentralization of administration and to further community development in order to give rural people an opportunity to better participate in development activities and politics at the local level.
- To contribute to the integration of development activities of the various Ministries in rural areas.(23)

Mbalachanda is one of ten centres created in the country under the West Germany Technical Assistance Scheme. At the time of the visit this scheme was being administered by the Office of the President and Cabinet. The centre itself is a small town with all basic social and economic amenities desirable in a town. It has a market, shops, bars, a dispensary, rest house, primary school and a community 'recreation' centre. Surrounding it are some villages and tobacco estates. There are four distinct groups living and using facilities in Mbalachanda. There are: (a) the people who actually run the centre, (b) absent estate owners, (c) villagers who have always been in Mbalachanda from pre-colonial times and (d) the labourers who work on the tobacco estate either as wage-earning labourers or as tenants. Each of these groups leads a life unique to itself and perhaps telling in the way the whole area is 'developing' or indeed being 'underdeveloped'.

The people who run the centre comprise extension workers (agriculture, health, literacy, forestry conservation, home economics and small business advisor), dispensary personnel, postal clerks, primary school teachers, community centre warden, shop and bar owners as well as their employees. These form an economic group of their own with reasonably high incomes comparatively. The villagers on the other hand are self employed. They make their living from subsistence agriculture. The group of labourers as indicated is made up of those who get a monthly wage and those whose income comes at the end of the tobacco season depending on how well they do on their plot and how much the estate owners are ready to pay for their crop.

Ideally the centre is meant to cater for the villagers who have always lived in Mbalachanda. And it is to these that the extension workers at the centre direct their efforts. When the Chancellor College Travelling Theatre was trying to get a list of problems needing attention in the area, it was from extension workers that they were sought. These confined their observations to villagers. All the problems cited came from amongst these villagers and nowhere else. Nothing was mentioned about life at the centre itself and the resulting relationships between the various people surrounding and affected by it. Yet the coming of an infra-structure of the centre's type has sprung up its own problems. Within the ten days that the group was there several social problems surfaced. These are a result of: the urban-modern nature of the centre amidst a chiefly rural community, the effect of migrant labour which works on the estates, and the development of a dual economy - made up of a subsistence one in the village and a cash one based on estate ownership, civil service and wage labour. There was tension between villagers and those in paid employment. David Kerr points out that:

> Among the (Mbalachanda) villagers this expresses itself in distrust of extension workers from the Project who are identified with the modern sector.(24)

The relationship between absent estate owners and labourers is difficult to visualize in a positive light. Considering that the estate owners have made no provision for the welfare of tenants and labourers working for them one only envisages a very tenuous and insecure relationship between the two groups.(25) Having no families with them on the estates, farm labourers resort to drunkenness and prostitution. The number of pubs in Mbalachanda for exceeds that of shops or groceries.

Whilst health, literacy, modern methods of agriculture and home economics form the core of extension services being offered to Mbalachanda residents, the real problems of underdevelopment are being left to flourish. Nobody so far seems to have questioned, and called for a check to such developments. If there is apathy in this area it is at this level. The Chancellor College Travelling Theatre found itself cornered into reckoning with these apart from the stereotype list of problems identified by extension workers in the centre.

What is evident now is that the root cause of apathy amongst villagers goes deeper than theatre for development practitioners usually assume. In order for them to fully come to grips with problems of development they cannot rely on extension workers. By insisting that they work together with government extension workers, they deny themselves the opportunity to question strategies which these agents stand for and follow in their work amongst the masses. Even if they employ such a method as 'participatory research' in their investigations of problems, as long as they operate within government lines and policies, they bring upon themselves structures that make their work ineffective.

Of course the problem of research is not so simple. Chilibvumbo points at other complications that social researchers face in African states. These also affect theatre for development work. He discusses these complications and says that some of the problems in such work

> emanate from the political domain. Much of it affects the selection of researchable topics, the question of content and the actual interviewing situations. These problems relate to the nature of the direction, purpose and intents of the post-independent African states.(26)

In countries where the masses have been heavily politicized through the efficiency of one-party state system, like in Malawi and Zambia, any work with the masses must respect the local party hierarchy. This is so even if the government gives approval to work aimed at the masses - as it happened in the Mbalachanda workshop in Malawi. Work carried out amongst the masses enjoys success or failure depending on which side of the party it is. Going out to invoke a critical outlook amongst the masses outside the party structure and policy may infringe upon a set-up which has its own procedures for doing so. But on the other hand going through the party inevitably means giving up a certain amount of autonomy.

Theatre for development practitioners in Malawi and Zambia have chosen to work within the political set-up in their countries. In this way they have reduced radically the potential impact of their work amongst the masses. Because of this it seems their work is more dedicated to 'development' issues as identified by government planners and politicians than by Freire. Having made this choice, it is easy to carry on with 'participatory research' of a kind. The rhetoric then sounds fervent and impressive:

> Participation is both goal and methodology (a) popular theatre programme attempts to increase participation of community members in development projects by involving them in the planning and running of the popular theatre programme.(27)

The wide Freirian goals of education become reduced to simple involvement in already identified 'development projects'.

There is yet another anomaly in this work. Whilst it may be claimed that the community participates 'in the planning and running of the popular theatre', the theatre genre being talked about does not (as an idea) come from them. Although taken allusion may be made to a few traditional songs, dances and other cultural artefacts, the truth remains that the theatre process of production or creation - let alone the mode of entertainment itself - is from outside. It is imposed, in a benevolent style, upon the community. What is being said here is that ideally one cannot talk of 'theatre for development' if Freire's ideas on 'cultural context' are taken intact. Participation in Freire's terms means total involvement even at the level of conceptualizing the vehicle of articulation. The educator, it must be remembered, becomes a 'co-worker not an applier of formulas'. 'Theatre for Development' as it is being carried out in Malawi and Zambia (and indeed the rest of Africa) is one formula being tried on the masses. Kidd and Byram sum up this very well as they talk about their own work in Batswana's Laedza Batanani:

> Participation is not just 'song and dance'. A villager may join in the songs and participate actively in the discussion but this is a different

> form of participation than selecting the campaign issues and structuring how they are to be presented for discussion ... . Popular theatre may be 'participatory' in the sense that local people are involved in producing it, in acting out the dramas and singing the songs, but unless they control the selection of content and the whole educational process they may become willing accomplices in their own domestication ... unless rural villagers control the popular theatre process they may be used as mere mouthpieces for ideas produced by others which mystify their reality.(28)

The idea of 'theatre for development', as it is being practised at the moment is a straight-jacket incompatible with the ideas of Freire. Perhaps if the community is left to establish a cultural means of articulating themselves they might come up with something totally different from what is being paraded around at the moment. Even where a theatre of the people has successfully been established, it has not been created for them by some educated elites, as is being done in Malawi and Zambia. It happened in Germany, for instance, around the end of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century as 'a child of its time, born of a marriage between political and artistic movements'.(29) These movements had their roots amongst the masses not just a handful of educated 'bourgeois' sympathisers. There is no suggestion of such movements in Malawi and Zambia. Rhetoric calling for such movements may be there, but it awaits being turned into a practicality.

It is therefore no wonder that the emphasis in 'theatre for development' is on the word 'development' rather than 'theatre'. During the Chalimbana workshop in Zambia artists complained that they were underutilized.(30) In Botswana, Kidd and Byram have called for:

> a shift away from a popular theatre oriented programme to a sustained programme of group organization, education, and action in which popular theatre is given a more narrowly defined, less prominent role.(31)

The work of Tafika Theatre emphasizes loyalty to 'data' collected during the so called 'participatory research' stage. They insist there should be no 'distortion of subject matter at all.'(32)

The Mbalachanda workshop in Malawi however suggest that if theatre is going to be used at all in adult education, it must be given as much attention in its creation as the problems it tries to deal with. Of the four plays that were created and presented by the Chancellor College Travelling Theatre at Mbalachanda Mchira wa Mtondori (The Lizard's Tail) was more effective, both as theatre and education, than the others. In fact, whilst the others died soon after the workshop, from the Travelling Theatre repertoire this one went to be performed both in urban and rural areas outside Mbalachanda. David Kerr argues that:

> the play's main advantage over the three improvised sketches was that by concentrating on domestic marital problems, rather than directly dealing with overtly 'developmental' issues of literacy, sanitation and agriculture, the play was able to avoid what Paulo Freire pejoratively refers to as "Extensionismo" - the tendency to manipulate audience emotions and learning process according to pre-conceived solutions of the animateurs.(33)

The beginning of theatre in this work is the animation process. Having collected, researched the various problems how do theatre practitioners turn them into drama? So far they followed the method of assigning roles, picking out significant moments and then simply acting them out. In this acting various theatrical conventions from the people's own indigenous culture - dance, song and proverbs - have been employed. Having done this they believe they have created not just an expression of the problems being experienced by the people, but also a theatre belonging to the people rather than from outside. The preference of Mchira wa Mtondori to the other three sketches in the Mbalachanda experience shows that such an approach to theatre only clouds the issues at stake. As Bas Kershaw would put it: the 'truth' of the problems remains disguised rather than revealed.(34) There is need for a better method. The success of Mchira wa Mtondori was accidental. But a few lessons may be learnt from this accident.

Emphasis in this theatre should be placed on creating authenticity in the animation process. Instead of worrying about the didactic nature of their work, practitioners should humanize the problems forming the basis of their work. They should do this not simply through creation and assigning of roles, but more so through exploring all possible relationships that people experiencing the problems might enter into with each other in various capacities. The process of elaboration, i.e. involvement of indigenous songs, dances and proverbs can then come in to enhance the authenticating of the problems.

The Primary Health Care theatre for development work cited here gives an extra dimension to the work that is being carried on by theatre practitioners. This is the ability and need to open up dialogue within the performance time. The advantage of this is that issues are debated within 'play' atmosphere while at the same time alternative courses of action are looked at. The audience do not only sit to be entertained, but to participate in a debate for which theatre is only a catalyst. This dispenses with the 'cold' after-performance discussions common to the more traditional uses of theatre.

The lesson to be drawn from the successful example of Liwonde PHC Unit programme is that development planning ought to be socially and community oriented. The communities should be mobilised and motivated to diagnose their own problems and find solutions for them. Theatre for development can be used to maximum effect in such work.

Primary Health Care planning, like most other areas of development has tended to adopt the rather narrow view of accessibility, relating it to the maximum distance people are willing to travel to obtain a particular health service. Consequently much emphasis has been placed on building new facilities at great capital and recurrent cost to the state without necessarily improving absolute access to rural inhabitants. In reality accessibility to health services is concerned with more than just proximity to these services; it involves various social, cultural and community health education issues. Active community participation and involvement is vital in the success of any development programme. As shown by the Liwonde Primary Health Care programme's relative success over a short period of time, there is a clear need to involve the rural people in the planning process. In other words, the planning process should not only come from above but should include a bottom-up/grass root level component as demonstrated by the Chancellor College Theatre for Development and the Liwonde ADD Primary Health Care programme in Mwima, in Malawi.

Another important point to be noted here is that this work is not a two-week or two-days workshop. It is going on everyday, alongside work of Primary Health Care in the area. In other words, theatre activity has become part and parcel of the whole programme. This is probably why it is successful in such a quantifiable manner.

Theatre for development is a recent development in the process of change that theatre is going through on the continent. Taking off from dissatisfaction with main stream theatre practice of West End or Broadway that were imported from outside practitioners want to develop relevant and meaningful African theatre. They have rejected the romantic approach of the 'negritudist' school. They have rejected the 'individualistic'/elitist school of drama established during the colonial era. Instead, they seek to get together with the people, joining the rural majority as co-workers in the process of bringing up relevant theatre. This process involves marrying what is good from international theatre practice and the people's own indigenous forms and ways of articulating them without necessarily revoking exoticism possible around either forms. Communication is the kingpin in this marriage. The principle guiding this work would seem to fit in most perfectly with our understanding of a typical African theatrical performance discussed at the beginning of this book. This is theatre that is a process for enhancing understanding, participation and appreciation of life. Being such it serves both to entertain and to provide a societal function in a concrete way.

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

[1] R. Foskett (ed.), The Zambezi Journal and letters of Dr. John Kirk, Vol. I. Oliver and Boyd, 1965.

[2] Foskett, Ibid., pp. 173-174.

[3] D. Fraser, Winning a Primitive People, London: Seely Service, 1914, p. 76.

[4] 'Notes - "African Drama", Oversea Education, Vol. IV, No. 3, April 1933, pp. 160-161.

[5] G.A. Stevens, 'The Aesthetic Education of the Negro' Oversea Education, Vol. V, No. 2, January 1934, pp. 112-116.

[6] Mary Kelly, 'African Drama' Oversea Education, Vol. II, No. 3, April 1931, pp. 109-113.

[7] 'Notes - "African Drama and the British Drama League" Oversea Education, Vol. V, No. 2, January 1934.

[8] G.A. Stevens, op. cit., pp. 112-116.

[9] Joel Adedeji, 'Nationalism and the Nigerian Theatre', Munger: African Library Notes, Issue No. 54, July 1980: California Inst. Technology, p. 7.

[10] G.A. Stevens, 'The Aesthetic Education of the Negro'. Oversea Education, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 1930, pp. 88-94.

[11] Mary Kelly, 'A Conference on African Drama'. Oversea Education, Vol. II, No. 3, pp. 120-126. Report of first conference organised by the British Drama League - September 1932.

[12] 'Report on African Drama', Oversea Education, Vol. IV, No. 3, April, 1983.

[13] W.H. Taylor, 'Observations on the Dramatic Talent of Africans'. Oversea Education, Vol. V, No. 1, October 1933, p. 17.

[14] W.H. Taylor, Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[15] W.H. Taylor, Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[16] Oversea Education, Vol. V, No. 2, January 1934, pp. 125-8.

[17] Dhlomo, The Girl Who Killed to Save, Lovedale, 1936. See Stephen Gray's entry on this play in Southern African Literature, David Philip, Cape Town, 1979, p. 194.

[18] See reports of drama work at Ibadan (Nigeria) in Ibadan, Vol. 3, June 1958.

[19] Gerald Moore, 'Macbeth and African Drama', Transition, No. 4, (Kampala) p. 27.

[20] Gerald Moore, Ibid., p. 27.

[21] David Rubadiri, 'Lewis Nkosi and David Rubadiri'. Interview published in African Writers on African Writing, (ed.) G.D. Killam, H.E.B. 1973, pp. 118-126.

[22] Rasmaran, J.A., New Approaches to African Literature, Ibadan University Press, 1965.

[23] Ramsaran, Ibid, pp. 63-64.

[24] Finnegan, R. Oral Literature in Africa, Oxford University Press, 1970. See last chapter.

[25] Kirby, E.T. 'Indigenous African Theatre', The Drama Review, Volume 18, No. 4, December 1974, pp. 22-35.

[26] Martin Esslin, Anatomy of Drama, Abacus, 1978.

[27] Ola Rotimi, "The Drama in African Ritual Display'. Nigeria Magazine, No. 99, December 1968.

[28] Herbert Read, "The Origins of Form in the Plastic Arts" in The Sociology of Literature, ed., C. Milton, et al. Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd, 1970, pp. 35-54.

[29] Rotimi, op. cit.

[30] Richard Courtney, Play, drama and thought: the intellectual background to drama in education, London, Cassel, 1974.

[31] Aristotle, op. cit., p. 15.

[32] Finnegan, op. cit., p. 503.

[33] A. van Gennep, The Rites of Passage, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960, p. 2.

[34] Jane Harrison, 'From Ritual Art' in Elizabeth and Tom Burns (eds.), Sociology of Literature and Drama, Penguin Modern Sociology Readings, 1973, pp. 323-327.

[35] Jane Harrison, Ibid., pp. 323-327.

[36] K.E. Senanu, 'Towards a definition of African Drama', Paper presented at the First Ibadan Annual African Literature Conference, 6-10 July, 1976.

[37] Martin Banham, African Theatre Today, Pitman, 1976 see introductory chapter.

[38] Enoch Timpunza Mvula, 'The Performance of Gule Wamkulu', paper presented at the 6th Ibadan Annual African Literature Conference on "The Oral Performance in Africa," Ibadan, Nigeria, July 27 - August 1, 1981.

[39] See C.F. Kamlongera, 'Problems in the Growth of a Popular Art Form: The Relationship between Drama and Society in Malawi and Zambia', Ph.D. Thesis, Chapter 5.

[40] Kamlongera,Ibid.

[41] See Petr Bogatyer, 'Semiotic in the Folk Theatre', in Semiotics of Art, eds. Matejka and Titunik, M.I.T. Press, Massachusetts, 1976, p. 52.

[42] Lionel Gossman, 'Signs of the Theatre', Theatre Research International, Vol. II, No. 1, October 1976, p. 5.

[43] Soyinka, Myth, Literature and the African World, Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 40.

[44] Soyinka, Ibid., p. 40.

[45] See Kamlongera, Thesis, op. cit., p. 197.

[46] See Audrey Richard Chisungu, Tavistock Publications, N.Y. 1982, and Patience Gibbs, 'Drama and Theatre in Malawi', M.A. thesis, University of Malawi, 1980.

[47] See Mary Tew, Peoples of the Lake Nyasa Region, Oxford University Press, 1950.

[48] Wole Soyinka, op. cit., pp. 38-39.

[49] Joe de Graft, 'Roots in African Drama and Theatre' in African Literature Today, No. 8, Drama in Africa, H.E.B., 1976, pp. 1-25.

[50] Joe de Graft, Ibid.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

[1] Ramsaran, J.A., New Approaches to African Literature, pp. 63-64.

[2] Very few exceptions exist in the works of Gérard and Jahn which attend to vernacular drama and literature.

[3] See Albert Gérard's African Language Literature, Longman, U.K., 1981.

[4] Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 'Towards a National Culture' The Home Coming, H.E.B., 1972, p. 10.

[5] Kwame Nkrumah, Selected Speeches, compiled by Samul Obeng. African Publications, Ghana, 1961.

[6] Ngugi wa Thiong'o, op. cit., p. 10.

[7] See Ebun Clark, Herbert Ogunde: The Making of Nigerian Theatre, O.U.P., 1979.

[8] Bernth Lindfors, 'Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Early Journalism' WLWE, p. 34. Ngugi wa Thiong'o is reported to have suggested that the Makerere College Dramatic Society "organise a touring company..." How much this influenced David Cook's ideas of a Travelling Theatre still needs to be established.

[9] K. Kaunda, see A Humanist in Zambia.

[10] Cultural Events in Africa, No. 18 May (1965), p. 5.

[11] See C.F. Kamlongera, Ph.D. Thesis 'Problems in the Growth of a Popular Art Form: The relationship between drama and society in Malawi and Zambia.' University of Leeds, 1984, pp. 120-124.

[12] Wole Soyinka, 'The Writer in an African State'. Transition, No. 31, pp. 11-13.

[13] Chinua Achebe, 'The Role of the Writer in a New Nation'. Nigeria Magazine, No. 81, June 1964, p. 157.

[14] Wole Soyinka, unpublished transcript of an interview recorded and transcribed by James Gibbs in Zimbabwe, 1983.

[15] Ezekiel Mphahlele, in Literature and the University (ed.) Gerald Moore, University of Ibadan Press, 1965, pp. 22-26.

[16] Mphahlele, Ibid., pp. 22-26.

[17] Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Towards a National Culture' in Homecoming, H.E.B.

[18] Interview recorded in Cultural Events in Africa, No. 31, June 1967.

[19] *Ibid.*, Cultural Events in Africa No. 31.

[20] Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Talk on "Modern Writing in Africa" at College of Adult Education, All Saints, Manchester, England, June 1982.

[21] *The Guardian*, Wednesday April 14, 1982.

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

[1] The Zomba Community Centre functioned as a Primary School until the Government built a school in the town.

[2] Banham, 'Drama in the Commonwealth: Nigeria' New Theatre Magazine, Vol. No. 4, July 1960, p. 18.

[3] Banham, Theatre Today, Pitman 1976. In this book he acknowledges fully the professionalism of Alarinjo players.

[4] Ibadan, June 1958, Volume 3 Between 1957 and 1958, the following plays were produced: Noah by Audre Obey, The Merchant of Venice by Shakespeare, The Magic Flute by Mozart and The Gentle People by Irwin Shaw.

[5] Gerald Moore called for more 'Macbeths' at Kampala in order to get people to appreciate 'good' theatre. See his 'Macbeth and African Drama' footnote No. 8 below.

[6] All productions reported for instance in Malawi during the 1950s were of British Plays. See C.F. Kamlongera, Ph.D. thesis, Leeds, 1984.

[7] See C.F. Kamlongera "The British and the Beginnings of Contemporary African Drama", Baraza, No. 3, April 1986, pp. 23-47. The article shows why this is so.

[8] M.M. Mahood, "The Gentle People" a review in Ibadan, June 1958, p. 28.

[9] Gerald Moore, 'Macbeth and African Drama', Transition, No. 4, p. 27.

[10] Adrian Stanley, 'Theatre in Darkest Africa' Drama (London) LXIII (Winter 1961) p. 28.

[11] Adrian Stanley, Ibid., p. 28.

[12] Adrian Stanley, Ibid., p. 28.

[13] Adrian Stanley, Ibid., pp. 28-29.

[14] Michael Crowder, 'Patronage and audience in Nigeria'. Black Orphens, Vol. 4, No. 1, University of Lagos, 1981, pp. 68-74.

[15] See 'Nigeria's National Troupe: Throbo of Hope', Business in Ecowas, September 4, 1987, pp. 53-54.

[16] Theo Vincent, 'Theatre and audience in Nigeria'. Black Orphens, Vol. 4 No. 1, University of Lagos, 1981, pp. 80.83.

[17] Wole Soyinka, 'Towards a True Theatre' in Transition, No. 8, January/March 1963, pp. 63-64. It is interesting to note that Michael Etherton thinks otherwise in his article 'Trends in African Theatre'. African Literature Today, ed. Eldred Jones, H.E.B., p. 70.

[18] Soyinka, Ibid., pp. 63-64.

[19] Soyinka, Ibid., pp. 63-64.

[20] Soyinka, Ibid., pp. 63-64.

[21] Soyinka, Ibid., pp. 63-64.

[22] Ngugi wa Thiong'o '"Handcuffs" for a Play', in Writers in Politics, H.E.B., 1987, pp. 49-52. Ngugi's words contradict Etherton's rosy and positive picture presented in article cited in footnote No. 15.

[23] Okot p'Bitek, Africa's Cultural Revolution. MacMillan Books for Africa, Nairobi, 1973, pp. 6-7.

[24] p'Bitek, Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[25] Michael Etherton and Peter Magyer, 'Fall Streets and Empty Theatres: The need to relate the forms of drama to a developing society'. Black Orphens, Vol. 4, No. 1, University of Lagos, 1981, pp. 46-60.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

[1] Adedeji, Joel, '"Alarinjo",: The Traditional Yoruba Travelling Theatre' in *Theatre in Africa*, edited by Oyin Ogunba and Abiola Irele, Ibadan University Press, 1978, pp. 27-51.

[2] Stevenson, W.H., "Theatre on Wheels, 1964" *Ibadan*, Vol. 20, October, 1964, p. 26.

[3] Martin Banham, "Drama in the Commonwealth: Nigeria" *New Theatre Magazine*, Vol. No. 4, July 1960, p. 18.

[4] Mshengu, "After Soweto: People's Theatre and the Political Struggle in South Africa" *Theatre Quarterly*, Vol. p. 33.

[5] Mshengu, *Ibid*., p. 33.

[6] E.J. Collins, "Comic Opera in Ghana" *African Arts*, January 1976, Vol. IX, No. 2, p. 50.

[7] Efua Sutherland, *The Original Bob: The Story of Bob Johnson Ghana's Ace Comedian*, p. 6.

[8] Efua Sutherland, *Ibid*., p. 8.

[9] E.J. Collins, *op*. *cit*., p. 50.

[10] The University College Ibadan Dramatic Society (U.C.I.D.S.) toured (a) 'That Scoundrel Suberu' and adaptation of Moliere's 'Les Fourberies de Scapin'; (b) an adaptation of 'The Taming of the Shrew', (c) adaptation of 'Comedy of Errors' (d) 'A Shakespeare Festival' on wheels. See 'Nigeria - Theatre Survey' in *New Theatre Magazine*, Vol. XII, No. 2, pp. 15-18.

[11] David Cook's 'Theatre goes to the people!' in *Transition* 25, p. 35.

[12] see A. Baal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Pluto Press, London, 1979. Chapter One.

[13] Banham, "Drama in the Commonwealth: Nigeria" *op*. *cit*., p. 19.

[14] Banham, *Ibid*., p. 20.

[15] See Banham *African Theatre Today*, Pitman, 1975.

[16] Geoffrey Axworthy, "The Performing Arts in Nigeria - A Footnote" *New Theatre Magazine*, Vol. XII, No. 2, p. 17.

[17] Axworthy, *Ibid*., p. 17.

[18] Axworthy, *Ibid*., p. 17.

[19] Bernth Lindfors, "Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Early Journalism" W.L.W.E., Vol. 21, Autumn 1982, p. 34.

[20] David Cook and Miles Lee (eds.), Short East African Plays in English, H.E.B., 1970.

[21] Cook and Lee (eds.) Ibid., see Introduction.

[22] David Cook, 'Theatre Goes to the People!' op. cit., p. 33.

[23] Personal Communication with Mupa Shumba, Zomba, Malawi, January 1985.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

[1] John Linstrum, 'Drama in Malawi' in Oversea Challenge, No. 26, Autumn 1973, pp. 9-11.

[2] see Cultural Events in Africa, No. 64, 1970, p. 1.

[3] see Chikwakwa Theatre Review, 1971, p. 2, and C.F. Kamlongera, Ph.D. thesis 'Problems in the growth of a Popular Art Form: The relationship between drama and society in Malawi and Zambia', University of Leeds, 1984, p. 156.

[4] Michael Etherton, Chikwakwa Review, 1971, p. 10.

[5] Francis Imbuga, "The Dignity of the theatre artist" International Theatre Information, 1-2, 1980 UNESCO Institut International du Théâtre, pp. 89-90.

[6] Michael Etherton, Cultural Events in Africa, No. 64, 1970, p. 1.

[7] David Alexander, 'Comment on the Chipata Theatre Workshop - 1971' Chikwakwa (Theatre Review) 1971, pp. 33.

[8] Chikwakwa Theatre Review, 1971, p. 2.

[9] Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "Women in Cultural Work: The fate of Kamiriithu people's theatre in Kenya" in Barrel of a Pen, New Beacon Books, London 1983, p. 42.

[10] see Oga S. Aba and Michael Etherton 'The Samaru Projects: Street Theatre in Northern Nigeria', Theatre Research International, Vol. VII, No. 3, Autumn 1982.

[11] see Ngugi wa Thiong'o, op. cit., pp. 39-51.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

[1] Stevens, G.A. 'The Aesthetic Education of the Negro'. Oversea Education, Volume I, No. 3, April 1930, pp. 92-93.

[2] Stevens, G.A., Ibid., pp. 92-93

[3] Kelly, Mary. 'African Drama'. Oversea Education, Volume II, No. 3, April 1931, pp. 109-113.

[4] Ibid., p. 110.

[5] Ibid., p. 112.

[6] 'Notes'. Oversea Education, Volume IV, No. 3, April 1933, pp. 160-161.

[7] Ibid., p. 161.

[8] Taylor, W.H., 'Observations on the Dramatic Talent of Africans'. Oversea Education, Vol. V. No. 1, October 1933, pp. 17-20.

[9] Taylor, Ibid., p. 17.

[10] Taylor, Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[11] Taylor, Ibid., p. 18.

[12] Oversea Education, Volume V, No. 2, January 1934, pp. 125-128. It will be interesting to see what the British Drama League Archives has, particularly in relation to African responses to this call.

[13] Ferreira, H.H. 'The Use of Social Case Drama in Training African Social Workers'. Rhodes- Livingstone Institute Papers No. XIII, 1953, Manchester University Press, pp. 35-40.

[14] Ferreira, H.H. Ibid.,

[15] Mudenda, Hon. E.H.K., Speech at the Official Opening of the Theatre for Development Workshop held at Chalimbana In-Service Training Institute on 19 August 1979 (in Theatre for Development by Chifunyise, Kerr and Dall), published by I.T.I. (Z) (1978), pp. 4-7.

[16] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[17] Kidd, R. (oss), 'Liberation or Domestication' in Educational Broadcasting International, p. 3.

[18] Kerr, David. 'Didactic Theatre in Africa'. Harvard Education Review, 51 (February 1981), Vol. I, pp. 145-155.

[19] Kidd, Ross and Byram, Martin. 'Demystifying Pseudo-Freirian non-formal Education: A case description and analysis of Laedza Batanani'. MS., Toronto, January 1981.

[20] Kidd, R. *Ibid.*

[21] Etherton, Michael. 'Drama for Farmers'. The Times (London), December 1, 1977.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] Abah, Oga S., and Etherton, Michael. 'The Samaru Projects: Street Theatre in Northern Nigeria'. MS., pp. 1-21. Ahmadu Bello University, 1982.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

[25] Etherton, Michael. 'Trends in African Theatre' in African Literature Today No. 10, pp. 57-85. H.E.B., 1980.

[26] Abah and Etherton, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

[27] *Ibid.* p. 16.

[28] UNESCO. Support for the creative arts: Three examples of Canada, France and Spain. Cultural Development Documentary, Dossier 15.

[29] *Ibid.* p. 5.

[30] Ngugi wa Thiong'o. 'Kenyan Culture: The National Struggle for Survival'. Writers in Politics, Heinemann, London, 1981, pp. 42-48.

[31] Kidd, Ross, et al. Laedza Batanani: Organizing Popular Theatre The Laedza Batanani Experience 1978. Institute of Adult Education, University of Botswana.

[32] Project LEARN. Instructor's Guide. Government of Sierra Leone/Care Publication, March 1982. Freetown. (no page numbers).

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] Youngman, Frank. Report on Bosele Tshwarayanang 1976. Bosele Tshwarayanang Publications No. 6, University College of Botswana, Institute of Adult Education, 1979, initially published by Kgatleng District Extension Team U.B.S., Botswana Extension College, 1977, p. 3.

[36] Ibid., p. 17. Also see T.O. Ranger's Dance and Society in East Africa.

[37] Ibid., p. 8.

[38] Personal communication with the Chief Extension Officer, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Malawi, 1981.

[39] Youngman, op. cit., p. 15.

[40] Project LEARN, op. cit.

[41] Kidd and Byram. 1981, op. cit., p. 1.

[42] Ibid., p. 11.

[43] Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Talk on Modern Writing in Africa at College of Adult Education, All Saints, Manchester, June 1982.

[44] Ngugi wa Thiong'o. I Will Marry When I Want, Heinemann, Nairobi, 1981.

[45] Ngugi wa Thiong'o, op. cit., talk at Manchester - June 1982.

[46] Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Mother, Cry for Me, Heinemann, Nairobi, 1982.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

[1] Etherton and Crow, 'Popular Drama and Popular Analysis in Africa' in *Tradition for Development*, (eds.) Ross Kidd and Nat Collette, p. 573.

[2] D.J. Bradfield, *Guide to Extension Training*, F.A.O., Rome, 1966, p. 159.

[3] Horst Dequin, *Agricultural Development in Malawi*, IFO, Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, München, 1969, p. 83.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 81.

[5] See *Nyasaland Colonial Annual Report* 1948 and 1949, which explain the climatic conditions leading to this famine.

[6] *Special Study on Social Advancement in Non-Self Governing Territories - 1957-1959*, UN, New York, 1962, p. 109.

[7] Dequin, *op*. *cit*., p. 89.

[8] *Ibid*., p. 89.

[9] Bradfield, *op*. *cit*., p. 160.

[10] *Ibid*., p. 160.

[11] Mobile Cinema Schedule (N. Region), 1982, p. 1.

[12] Personal communication with the Principal Extension Officer, September 1982.

[13] *Extension Aids Branch Annual Report 1980*, Lilongwe, Malawi.

[14] Personal Communication with Mr. Naziche (Technical Officer and founding member of puppetry in the department).

[15] Based on visits to Extension Services Branch in September 1982.

[16] Based on September 1982 enquiries. There could be others by now.

[17] Letter from the Principal Extension Aids Officer to Mr. M. Byram, dated 23rd May, 1977.

[18] From 'notes' Extension Aids Branch, Lilongwe, 1982.

[19] Cinema Schedule, *op*. *cit*., p. 8.

[20] *Ibid*., p. 7.

[21] Bradfield, op. cit., p. 90.

[22] Ibid., p. 91.

[23] Nyau members believe that Puppets are a parody of their masks and figures. Amongst women it is believed that proximity to the puppets by pregnant women would affect their unbord fetus.

See David Kerr, 'Popular and populist Theatre in Malawi' in Third World Popular Theatre Newsletter, Volume 1, No. 1, January 1982, p. 46.

[24] Personal communication with Mr. A. Mwenifumbo one time Public Health Inspector in Chitipa (Northern Region) and Salima (Central Region), 1982.

[25] Cinema Schedule, op. cit., p. 3.

[26] Extension Aids Report, op. cit., pp. 1 and 7.

[27] This is part of a German Technical Assistance Project aimed at opening several centres in the country.

[28] Report on Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre, Office of the President and Cabinet, Lilongwe, Malawi, 1978.

[29] E. Timpunza-Mvula, The Lizard's Tail, 9 Malawian Plays, ed. James Gibbs, Popular Publications, Malawi, 1975.

[30] Letter to the Promotion Officer (Small-Scale Industries) Ref. No. Dev/21/10C/15 from the Secretary, Office of the President and Cabinet, Lilongwe, Malawi.

[31] See G. Szanto, Theatre and Propaganda, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1978, on this question.

[32] See Report of the International Conference P.H.C. at Alma Ata, organised by the WHO and the UNICEF, 6-12 September, 1978, Geneva: WHO 1978.

[33] See Bennet and Cole-King (1982) and Msukwa (1981).

[34] See United Nations, 1984.

[35] A key element in the success of primary health care in China is a very small central bureaucracy which communicates effectively with all regions of the country but is concerned basically with policy decisions. The local units have total responsibility for deciding how the policy will be implemented and when, where and by whom, and obviously, control of their local resources for the implementation of activities - see Taylor 1982.

[36] World Bank, 1980.

[37] National Statistical Office, 1984.

[38] National Statistical Office, 1980.

[39] Bennet and Cole-King, 1982. op. cit.

[40] Bennet, et al. Ibid.

NOTES TO CHAPTER EIGHT

[1] David Kerr and Garikayi Shoniwa, Matteo Sakala, Multimedia Publications, Zambia, 1978.

[2] Michael Etherton, 'Indigenous Performance in Zambia'. Theatre Quarterly, Vol. III, No. 10, April - June 1973, p. 44.

[3] 'Introduction', 1971 Chikwakwa Review.

[4] Obediah Mazombwe and Tom Morris, 'Chipata Theatre Workshop - October 1971', 1971 Chikwakwa Review, p. 20.

[5] This was not a big problem in the territory considering that there were very few Europeans. Most of the energy of the Council was spent on African youths.

[6] Northern Rhodesia Annual Report, 1959, p. 10. (entry by Director of Social Welfare).

[7] Northern Rhodesia Annual Report, 1960, p. 14. (entry by Director of Social Welfare).

[8] S. Chifunyise, 'The Formative Years - An analysis of the Development of Theatre in Zambia from 1950 to 1970'. Staff Seminar Paper, Literature and Language Department, University of Zambia, January 1978, p. 55.

[9] Annual Report, 1969, for Ministry of Labour and Social Service, Government of Zambia, p. 9.

[10] Chifunyise, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

[11] See Tom Baldwin's 'The Play's the thing' in Overseas Challenge, No. 23, Autumn 1972, pp. 20-22, which suggested that this was the first tour into the rural areas. In an interview with Bagnor, Etherton mentions this tour as well.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid., p. 20.

[14] Ibid., p. 20.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Baldwin, op. cit.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid., p. 21.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[23] Trevor Coombe and Roy Clarke, (devised), *Readings and Questions on Education in Zambia*, University of Zambia, p. 102.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

[25] Mazombwe and Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-31.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[27] David J. Alexander, 'Comment on the Chipata Theatre Workshop - 1971', Chikwakwa, 1971, p. 33.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[30] Michael Ward, '1972 Mongu Theatre Workshop: Notes', Chikwakwa, 1972-73, pp. 22-23.

[31] Robert Fraser, 'Kamuhelo Theatre in Mongu: the Final Stages of Construction and the First Performance', Chikwakwa, 1972-73, pp. 28-32.

[32] Japhet P. Msimuko, 'Research Project in Traditional Dances and Folk Tales Among the Chewa of Lundazi', *Chikwakwa Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, November 1972, pp. 1-3.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[35] From 'Suggested Chikwakwa Theatre Programme and Budget for 1973-74', Department of Language and Literature, University of Zambia.

[36] Cosmas Chipulu, 'Theatre Workshop in Kitwe 28th - 29th April 1973', *Chikwakwa 1973-74*, p. 15.

[37] Production team (of *Matteo Sakala*), 'The Evolution of *Matteo Sakala*. An Experiment in group creativity', *Chikwakwa* 1977, p. 9.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[39] David Kerr and Garkayi Shoniwa, Matteo Sakala, Multimedia, Lusaka, Zambia, p. 5.

[40] Ibid., p. 43.

[41] Ibid., p. 44.

[42] Ibid., p. 53.

[43] Ibid., p. 54.

[44] Ibid., p. 55.

[45] Ibid., p. 57.

[46] Ibid., p. 60.

[47] Ibid., p. 69.

[48] Ibid., p. 85.

[49] Programme notes by University of Zambia students doing the E990 Course in 1976-77 academic year.

[50] Fanuel K. Sumaili, 'Review of Matteo Sakala', Chikwakwa 1977, pp. 4-8.

[51] David Kerr, 'Bambo Kachasu: An account of its creation, including a brief review of the performance', Chikwakwa 1978-9, p. 3.

[52] Ibid., p. 3.

[53] Sumaili, op. cit., p. 4.

[54] Special Study on Social Advancement in Non-Self Governing Territories, UN, op. cit., p. 23.

[55] Internationalist, April 1973, p. 4.

[56] Ibid., p. 4.

[57] Ibid., p. 4.

[58] Quoted in Kerr and Shoniwa op. cit., pp. 16-17.

[59] Kerr and Shoniwa, Ibid., p. 84.

[60] Production Team (of Matteo Sakala), op. cit., p. 10.

[61] Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart, African Writers Series, H.E.B.

[62] Kerr, op. cit., p. 5.

[63] Ibid., p. 5.

[64] S. Chifunyise, D. Kerr and F. Dall, Theatre for Development, International Theatre, Lusaka, 1980, pp. 2-3.

[65] Ibid., p. 1.

[66] S. Chifunyise, 'Preview of Workshop on Theatre for Development, Chalimbana, August, 1979', Chikwakwa 1979-80, p. 8.

[67] Chifunyise et al., op. cit., p. 1.

[68] Ibid., pp. 4-7.

[69] Chifunyise, op. cit., p. 8.

[70] Chifunyise et al., op. cit., p. 13.

[71] Ibid., p. 14.

[72] Ibid., p. 23.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Ibid., p. 55.

[75] Interview with Amandina Lihamba, at Leeds University, May 1982. See appendix in C.F. Kamlongera's Ph.D. Thesis, School of English 1984 "Relationship between Drama and Society in Zambia and Malawi".

[76] Chifunyise et al., op. cit., p. 60.

[77] Ibid., p. 60.

[78] Ibid., p. 61.

[79] Lihamba, Interview, op. cit.

[80] Chifunyise et al., op cit., p. 57.

[81] Ibid., p. 61.

[82] *Ibid.*

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[84] Tapiwa Muchenje, 'Community Response to Alcohol-Related Problems Theatre Team Mwacisompola Report', University of Zambia Institute for African Studies, October 1981.

[85] Tapiwa Muchenje, 'Community Response to Alcohol-Related Problems Theatre Team Chawama Report', University of Zambia Institute for African Studies, September 1981, p. 2.

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[87] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[90] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[91] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[92] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[93] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[94] Muchenje, 'Chawama Report', *op. cit.*, p. 19.

NOTES TO CHAPTER NINE

[1] See George Szanto, op. cit., p. 9. on the concept of propaganda theatre types.

[2] Bradfield, op. cit., Chapter 2.

[3] Dennis Collins, Paulo Freire, His Wife, Works and Thought, Paulist Press, New York, 1977, p. 3.

[4] Ibid., p. 3.

[5] Ross Kidd and Byram, 'Demystifying pseudo-Freirian non-formal Education: A case description and analysis of Laedza Batanani', (MS) Toronto, January 1981, 'p. 1.

[6] See Paulo Freire, Education as the Practice of Freedom, p. 19.

[7] Kidd and Byram, op. cit.

[8] Collins, op. cit.

[9] By 'demystification' he means revealing how progressive-sounding development rhetoric which obscures the realities of its target society needs to be made aware of its shortcomings and forced to address itself to the real problems that society faces.

[10] Paulo Freire, 'The People Speak', Harvard Educational Review, 51 (February 1981), I, pp. 27-30.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., p. 28.

[13] Ibid., p. 28.

[14] Paulo Freire, Cultural Action for Freedom, p. 42.

[15] Freire, 'The People Speak', op. cit., pp. 27-30.

[16] Ibid., pp. 27-30.

[17] See Stephen Adee Quick 'Bureaucracy and Rural Socialism: The Zambian Experience', Stanford University, Ph.D., 1975.

[18] Ibid.

[19] There are several reasons for this situation which include: a lack of appreciation of what rural development entails; chaotic administration and resulting inevitable wastage of resources. See B.D. Giles, 'Economists in Government: the Case of Malawi', Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 15, January 1979, No. 2, p. 229.

[20] The author has personal experience of this. In 1974 the author was working as a teacher at Balaka Secondary School in Malawi. During the Youth Week of that year the school with the aid of the community erected a boarding house at no labour cost.

[21] Anne Charnock, 'Malawi's piped water programme', African Water and Sewage, March 1983, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 41-42.

[22] Ibid., p. 42.

[23] Report on Mbalachanda Rural Growth Centre, op. cit., p. 1.

[24] David Kerr, 'An Experiment in Popular Theatre in Malawi...', op. cit., p. 3.

[25] Ibid., p. 3.

[26] Alifeyo Chilivumbo, 'Social Research Methods in Malawi. A look at some mostly used methods', 5th Annual Social Science Conference, University of East Africa, Nairobi, December 8th - 12th 1969, pp. 972-980.

[27] Kidd and Byram, op. cit.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Cecil Davies, Theatre for the People, Manchester University Press, 1977, p. 1.

[30] Chifunyise, et al., op. cit.

[31] Kidd and Byram, op. cit., p. 27.

[32] Muchenje, 'Chawama Report', op. cit., p. 9.

[33] David Kerr, 'An Experiment in Popular Theatre in Malawi...', Chancellor College Staff Seminar Paper No. 18, November, 1981. op. cit., p. 15.

[34] Kershaw, 'Theatre Art and Community Action', Theatre Quarterly, Vol. VIII, 30, Summer 1978, p. 70.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Unpublished Theses and Papers

Aba, Oga S., Ph.D. Thesis, School of English, University of Leeds, 1987.

Gibbs, Patience. 'Drama and Theatre in Malawi', M.A. Thesis, University of Malawi, 1980.

Idoye, Patrick 'Popular Theatre and Politics in Zambia: A case study of the University of Zambia (Chikwakwa) Theatre', Ph.D. Thesis, Florida State University, 1981.

Kerr, David 'An Experiment in Popular Theatre in Malawi: The University Travelling Theatre's visit to Mbalachanda, July 1981', Chancellor College (University of Malawi) Staff Seminar Paper No. 18.

___________, 'Mchira wa Buluzi: The process of creating a popular vernacular play', Paper presented at a Conference on Popular Theatre, Bangladesh, February 1983.

Kidd, Ross and Byram, Martin 'Demystifying Pseudo-Freirian non-formal education: A case description and analysis of Laedza Batanani' mimeo, Toronto, January 1981.

Senanu, K.E. 'Towards a definition of African Drama', Paper presented at the First Annual African Literature Conference, Ibadan, 6th - 10th July, 1976.

Soyinka, Wole 'Soyinka in Zimbabwe' A transcript of a lecture given in Zimbabwe - transcribed by James Gibbs.

Articles

Aba, Oga S., and Etherton, M. 'The Samaru Projects: Street Theatre in Northern Nigeria', Theatre Research International, Volume VII, No. 3, Autumn 1982.

Adedeji, J. 'Nationalism and the Nigerian Theatre', Munger: Africana Library Notes. Issue No. 54, July 1980, California Institute of Technology.

Blair, Dorothy 'The Shaka theme in Dramatic Literature in French from West Africa', African Studies, Volume 33, No. 3, 1974.

Bogatyrer, Petr 'Semiotic in the Folk Theatre' in Semiotics of Art (eds.) Matejka and Tutunik, M.I.T. Press, Massachusetts, 1976.

Burson, Anne C. 'Model and Text in Folk Drama', Journal of the American Folklore Society, 93 (1980) 369.

Clarke, J.D. 'Experiments in African Drama', Oversea Education, Volume IV, No. 4, July, 1935.

Crowder, Michael 'Patronage and audience in Nigeria', Black Orpheus, Volume 4, No. 1, University of Lagos, 1981.

de Graft, J.C. 'Roots in African Drama and Theatre', African Literature Today No. 8, : Drama in Africa, H.E.B. 1976, pp. 1-25.

Etherton, Michael 'Drama for Farmers', The Times (London), December 1, 1977.

_______________, 'Trends in African Theatre', African Literature Today, No. 10, H.E.B., 1980, pp. 57-85.

_______________, 'Zambia: Popular Theatre', Third World Issue of New Theatre Magazine, Vol. XII, No. 2.

Etherton, Michael and Magyer, Peter 'Full Streets and Empty Theatres: The need to relate forms of drama to a developing society', Black Orpheus, Vol. 4, No. 1, University of Lagos, 1981, pp. 46-60.

Fabian. Johannes 'Popular Culture in Africa: Finding and conjectures', Africa, 48 (4), 1978, p. 315.

Freire, Paulo 'The People Speak', Harvard Educational Review, 51 (February 1981), 1, pp. 27-30.

Gossman, Lionel 'Signs of the Theatre', Theatre Research International, Vol. II, No. 1, October 1976.

Green Thomas A. 'Towards a Definition of Folk Drama', Journal of the American Folklore Society, 91 (1978) 846.

Harrison, Jane 'From Ritual to Art', in Sociology of Literature and Drama (eds.) Elezabeth and Tom Burns, Penguin Modern Sociology Readings, 1973, pp. 323-327.

Harrison J.N., and Harrison, T.W. 'Experimental Drama in Uganda', Oversea Education, Vol. IV, No. 2, January 1935, pp. 69-73.

Herskovits, Merville J. 'The Role of Culture-Pattern in the African Accultural Experience', Presence Africaine, Vol. 6/7, Nos. 34/35. pp. 7-16.

Horn, Andrew 'African Theatre - docility and dissent' Index on Censorship, Vol. 9, No. 3, June 1980.

Jones, A.M. 'African Music: The Mganda Dance', African Studies, IV, 4 December 1945).

Kamlongera, Christopher 'The British and the Beginning of African Drama' Africana Marburgensia, Marburg Vol. XIX, 1986. 1 .

_______________, 'The Development of Popular Theatre in East and Central Africa', New Literature Review, No. 13, 1983, Australia.

Kasoma, Kabwe 'Theatre for Development', International Theatre Information, 1-2, 1980 UNESCO, Institut International du Theatre, pp. 89-90.

Kelly, Mary 'African Drama', Oversea Education, Vol. II, No. 3, April 1931, pp. 109-113.

Kerr, David 'Didactic Theatre in Africa', Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 51, No. 1, 1981, pp. 145-156.

_______________, 'Popular and populist Theatre in Malawi', Third World Popular Theatre Newsletter, Vol. 1 No. 1, January 1982.

Kershaw, Baz 'Theatre Art and Community Action', Theatre Quarterly, Vol. VIII, 30, Summer 1978, p. 70.

Kidd, Ross 'Liberation or Domestication', Educational Broadcasting International, Vol. 12, March 1979, pp. 3-9.

Kidd, R. et al. 'Laedza Batanani: Organizing Popular Theatre The Laedza Batanani Experience 1978' Institute of Adult Education, University of Botswana.

Kirby, E.T. 'Indigenous African Theatre', The Drama Review, Vol. 18, No. 4, December 1974, pp. 22-35.

Lindfors, Bernth 'Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Early Journalism', W.L.W.E., Vol. 21. Autumn 1982.

Mitchell, J. Clyde 'The Kalela Dance', The Rhodes-Livingstone Papers, No. 27, University of Manchester Press.

Mwansa, Dickson 'Zambian Political Theatre', Index on Censorship, 2/82, pp. 33-35.

Oyomoyela, Oyekan 'Folklore and Yoruba Theatre' in Critical Perspectives on Nigerian Literature (ed.) Bernth Lindfors, Three Continent Press, 1976.

Rotimi, Ola 'The Drama in African Ritual Display', Nigeria Magazine.

Soyinka, Wole 'Towards a True Theatre', Transition, No. 8, pp. 63-64.

____________, 'The Writer in an African State', Transition, No. 31, pp. 11-13.

Stevens, G.A. 'The Aesthetic Education of the Negro' Oversea Education, Vol. 1 No. 3, April 1930, pp. 88-94.

Taylor, W.H. 'Observations on the Dramatic Talent of Africans' Oversea Education, Vol. V. No. 1, October 1933, pp. 17-20.

Thorpe, Michael 'Literature of rehabilitation', English Studies, Vol. 64, 4, August 1983, p. 346.

Vincent, Theo 'Theatre and Audience in Nigeria', Black Orpheus, Vol. 4 No. 1, University of Lagos, 1981, pp. 80-83.

Winterbottom, J.M. 'Experimental Drama in the Gold Coast', Oversea Education Vol. V, No. 2, January 1934, pp. 112-116.

Books

Aristotle, Poetics, (tr.) S.H. Butcher as Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art, Dover Publications Inc., 1957.

Banham, Martin J. African Theatre Today, Pitman, 1976.

Chifunyise, S., Kerr, D., and Dall, F. Theatre for Development, International Theatre Institute, Lusaka, 1980.

Clark, Ebun, Hubert Ogunde: The Making of Nigerian Theatre, Oxford University Press, 1979.

Cook, David and Lee, Miles (eds.) Short East African Plays in English, H.E.B., 1970.

Davies, Cecil, Theatre for the People, Manchester University Press, 1977.

Etherton, Michael, The Development of African Drama, Hutchinson, 1982.

Eyoh, Hansel Ndumbe Hammocks To Bridges, University of Younde Research Publication 1986

Finnegan, Ruth Oral Literature in Africa, Oxford University Press, 1970.

Gerard, Albert African Language Literature, Longman, Essex, U.K., 1981.

Gibbs, James (ed.) 9 Malawian Plays, Popular Publications, Limbe, Malawi, 1976.

Jahn, Janheinz Neo-African Literature, (tr.) Faber and Faber Ltd. : London, 1968; Evergreen New York, 1969.

Kidd, Ross and Colletta, Nat (eds) Tradition for Development: Indigenous Structures and Folk Media in Non-Formal Education, Berlin, 1980.

Koma Koma, M'ganda Kapena Malipenga, Malawi Publications Bureau, Limbe, Malawi, 1965.

McGrath, J. A Good Night Out, Methuen, London, 1981.

McLaren, R. Theatre and Cultural Struggle in South Africa, Zed, 1985.

Mayer, David and Richards, Kenneth (eds.) Western Popular Theatre, Methuen, London, 1977.

Moore, Gerald (ed.) Literature and the University, University of Ibadan Press, 1965.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Writer in Politics, H.E.B., London, 1981.

______________, Barrel of a Pen, New Beacon Books, London, 1983.

______________, Decolonising The Mind, Heinneman Books, 1986.

Ogunba O. and Irele, A. (eds.) Theatre in Africa, Ibadan University Press, 1978.

Ramsaran, J.A. New Approaches to African Literature, Ibadan University Press, 1965.

Ranger, T.O. Dance and Society in East African, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1975.

Roscoe, A.A. Mother is Gold, Cambridge University Press, 1965.

______________, Uhuru's Fire, Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Schipper, Mineke Theatre and Society in Africa, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, S.A., 1982.

Soyinka, Wole *Myth, Literature and the African World*, Cambridge University Press, 1975.

Sutherland, Efua. *The Original Bob: The Story of Bob Johnson, Ghana's Ace Comedian*. Anowuo Publications, Accra 1970.

Szanto, George *Theatre and Propaganda*, University of Texas Press Austin, 1978.

German Foundation for International Development

DSE

DSE IN BRIEF

- **Type of organization:** foundation established under civil law in 1959
- **Organs:** Board of Trustees with 18 members representing the Federal government, State governments, the Federal Parliament, trade and industry, the trade unions and the academic world; Executive Office with Director General

  and Deputy Director General
- **Staff:** 460 staff members in 1987
- **Budget in 1987:** DM 83.3 million
- **Participants in 1987:** 7,805 of whom 5,988 came from developing countries
- The seat of the DSE is Berlin. It also maintains specialized Centres at various locations in the Federal Republic of Germany.

  Berlin: Executive Office, Development Policy Forum (EF), Development Information Centre (EPIZ), Central Administration, Economic and Social Development Centre (ZWS), Public Administration Promotion Centre (ZÖV)

  Bonn: Education, Science and Documentation Centre (ZED)

  Bad Honnef: Area Orientation Centre (ZA)

  Mannheim: Industrial Occupations Promotion Centre (ZGB)

  Feldafing: Food and Agriculture Development Centre (ZEL)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Dialogue and exchange of experience between industrial and developing countries; promotion of the South-South dialogue
- Initial and advanced training of specialized and managerial personnel from developing countries
- Further training of German experts working in the field of development cooperation
- Preparation of German experts and their spouses/partners for their assignments in developing countries; further training of the inland staff of German development agencies
- Information and documentation in the field of development policy and developing countries
- Development of curricula and teaching materials for various areas of development cooperation

PERIODICALS

- "Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit" (E + Z), published in German in cooperation with the Carl Duisberg Society (CDG) (monthly)
- "D + C", English, French and Spanish/Portuguese editions of "E + Z" with regionalized content, published in cooperation with CDG (every two months)
- "Echo aus Deutschland", published in German in cooperation with the CDG (every two months)
- "entwicklung + ländlicher raum" (e + l), published in German in cooperation with the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and the German

  Agriculural Society (DLG) (6 times a year)
- Annual reports, in German, from 1960/61 onwards
- DSE Catalogue: Catalogue of DSE publications (annually)
- Calendar of seminars, courses and conferences in the field of development cooperation (quarterly)
- Developing country studies: bibliography of German research projects in the field of development, published in German (annually)

German Foundation for International Development

DSE

SELECTED AREAS OF WORK

Development Policy Forum (EF)
- Interdisciplinary meetings at policy level on current issues of North-South and South-South cooperation
- Joint activities with international organizations within and outside the UN system in the fields of development strategies, economic cooperation and sociocultural relations

Education, Science and Documentation Centre (ZED)
- Development of curricula/teaching aids for primary schools and teacher-training
- Promotion of literacy campaigns
- Development of distance study courses for staff of basic education programmes
- Advanced training of sports specialists for work in teacher-training or school-sport administration
- Further training of university lecturers in the fields of teaching, research and advisory assistance
- Support for measures to improve infrastructure in the field of science and technology
- Further training of librarians and of documentation and information specialists
- Collection, analysis and dissemination of specialized information on development policy and developing countries
- Central coordination and provision of information on the specialized field of development cooperation

Economic and Social Development Centre (ZWS)
- Advanced training in the fields of urban and regionaldevelopment, surveying and cartography
- Project management methodology
- Support for economic reforms and advisory services in the field of economic policy
- Support for the development and setting up of primary health services
- Training in the fields of health education, drug monitoring and epidemiology
- Development and promotion of new credit facilities and target-group-oriented financing instruments

Area Orientation Centre (ZA)
- Familiarization of German experts and their spouses/ partners with the language, history, geography and institutions of the Third World countries to which they are to be assigned (three-month seminar)

Public Administration Promotion Centre (ZÖV)
- Increase the efficiency of tax and customs administration, budgeting and accounting, and public financial control
- Strengthen local self-administration and promote decentralized administrative systems
- Promote schools and institutes of administration
- Improve development cooperation and economic cooperation within foreign services
- Further refine the concepts of administration promotion

Industrial Occupations Promotion Centre (ZGB)
- Technical and didactic further training of teaching and managerial staff for vocational schools and in-plant training establishments; further training of lecturers engaged in teacher-training
- Measures to promote and support vocational education centres
- Follow-up activities: seminars and the mailing of specialized literature
- Vocational training programmes to promote small enterprises in the informal sector
- Promotion of the crafts through vocational training

Food and Agriculture Development Centre (ZEL)
- Food security and food strategies
- Agricultural research and experimentation
- Integrated rural development
- Promotion of agricultural marketing, agricultural credit for small farmers
- Self-help organizations, cooperatives
- Agricultural training, extension and information
- Plant production, including seed and plant material multiplication
- Plant protection, including post-harvest and storage protection
- Agricultural engineering and soil and water management, including irrigation
- Forestry (with emphasis on energy supply and desertification and erosion control) and ecosystem conservation
- Animal production, including veterinary medicine and animal health services
- Marine and freshwater fishery, including aquaculture
- Nutrition services (nutritional education, food hygiene, food technology)

Development Information Centre (EPIZ)
- Events providing information on development policy and developing countries for groups of school-children, young people and adults